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ABBA EBAN

An Autobiography

Congregation B'nai Emunah
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.
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bringing the statute into effect, pending a further decision. This meant that we had avoided a clash between our own sovereignty in Jerusalem and any new legal authority created by the international community.

This, in fact, was the last that anybody was to hear about an operative proposal for an internationalized Jerusalem. A few months later the Soviet Union took the lead in the United Nations in announcing its abandonment of the internationalization idea. It came out in favor of the situation created on the ground by the armistic agreement under which Jerusalem was divided between Israel and Jordan.

Representing the Cabinet, Sharett sent me a cable expressing appreciation of my "magnificent effort on behalf of Jerusalem." He also suggested that I come back to Israel to explain what had happened. This time I rebelled. My separation from home since the tenth day of Eli's birth had had harsh emotional effects on Suzy and me, and I insisted on going back to New York, with Sharett's full understanding. I had spent more than three months in defensive action in Geneva.

I spent most of 1950 organizing our permanent mission at the United Nations. Most members of the UN had now established relations with Israel. We were basking in a climate of international cordiality. Even Bevin had yielded after his long rear-guard action, and diplomatic relations were established between Israel and Britain. Sir Alexander Cadogan, in his attitude toward me, made a chameleon-like change of mood from frigid disdain to a correct fraternal relationship. During one week I was lunching with Jessup of the United States in Manhattan, paying a cordial visit to the Soviet Mission on Park Avenue and dining with Cadogan at Oyster Bay. It was the honeymoon period in Israel's relations with the Great Powers.

Nevertheless, I was beginning to chaff at the confinements of my UN role. I felt that the basic contribution of the UN to Israel's consolidation had already been made. Henceforward we would at best fight a defensive action to protect what we had already achieved. I felt an urge to do something more constructive than to conduct a permanent rhetorical contest with Arab representatives. Israel's main political and military aims were assured. It was time to get down to concrete business. Zionism would now have to prove itself, not in polemics and criticism, but in daily achievement. There was no doubt where the priority lay. Our task was to open the gates, to heal the wounds and to receive what remained of European Jewry. We would also have to respond to a surge of exaltation in other parts of the Jewish world. In the old communities of Yemen and Iraq where Jews had lived long before Moslem and Arab history had begun, the rise of a Jewish state was like the sound of a trumpet, calling them to change the direction of their lives and to join in the construction of a new society. Israel had become a vast workshop filled with the clatter of countless tools knocking houses, roads and schools together. But the economy had undertaken tasks far beyond its unaided power. Israel was struggling hard to keep its head above water and to become a trading partner with other nations.

I had begun to envy my colleagues in places like Washington, London and elsewhere, whose work seemed to have a direct bearing on the real problems that now faced Israeli society. The mood at home was militantly concrete and empirical. Our hands were full of work. The very air vibrated with the tumult of creation. It seemed to me that we had more important things to do than to go on arguing endlessly about ourselves in United Nations debates.

As if in answer to my thoughts—deliverance and fulfillment came. While I was at a hotel in Atlanta, Georgia, during a speaking tour for the United Jewish Appeal, I received a message from Sharett: *"Ha'im tekabel et hatafkidayim?"* (Would you accept the two-jobs-in-one?). This was Sharett's terse manner of proposing that I be ambassador both in Washington and at the United Nations; in those days there were many diplomats who combined the two functions. They even got to know each other intimately by constant meetings on planes between Washington and New York.

The explanations of Sharett's cable was that our first envoy to the Court of St. James's, Dr. Mordechai Eliash, had died suddenly of a cardiac seizure. Great Britain still had a central place in our affairs. It was our chief market; and intricate financial problems arising from the end of the Mandate still remained unsolved. Moreover, Britain had a large experience in the Middle East. Many European countries still tended to follow its political lead. It had, therefore, been decided to ask Eliahu Elath to move from Washington to London. There were, of course, other motives at work—some of them connected with Ben Gurion's vigorous likes and dislikes. He felt that he must have somebody in Washington to whom he could communicate with some political intimacy.

I called Suzy at our New York home, and on receiving assent, I cabled an affirmative reply to Sharett. It was agreed that I should be ready to take charge of the Washington embassy after a brief round of valedictory occasions for Elath in Washington and New York.

So, early in September 1950, we reluctantly liquidated our apartment on Central Park West, and I arrived in Washington as ambassador designate just before the Jewish New Year. We took up our residence at the newly acquired embassy property in Myrtle Street, in the Northwest section of the capital.

At the age of thirty-five I was the youngest member of that august diplomatic corps. As I looked forward to the vistas opening before me, and back on what had befallen me since I went obscurely to the Jewish Agency in 1946, I had reason to feel that truth is sometimes more rewarding than fiction.

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Story of a Mission 1950-1956

OUR RESIDENCE IN MYRTLE STREET WAS MODEST BY ANY DIPLOMATIC standards. Eliahu and Zahava Elath, during their brief tenure at the embassy, had lived in a hotel, so the social tradition of the Israeli mission was still to be established. The chancery was located at first in a narrow ramshackle building on Massachusetts Avenue. It was symbolically interesting that the Luxembourg legation next door was more spacious and impressive than the rickety offices we were to occupy. Our new chancery on Columbia Avenue was in preparation. It seemed lavish at the time, but it soon became too small for our needs.

The formal framework of the American-Israeli relationship had already been set. An economic link had been established when President Weizmann secured Truman's assent to an Export-Import Bank loan of $100 million. The sum seems trivial in this age of billions, but it was astronomically high in those days. After all, Israel's export earnings in its first year amounted to only $48 million, so that the United States was providing a larger proportion of our total foreign-currency assets than it does now.

In questions of Middle Eastern security, the United States was moving cautiously. It did not wish to assume any unilateral obligations. In May 1950 it had joined Britain and France in a tripartite declaration, opposing changes of the armistice lines by force and promising to ensure that arms supplies would be regulated so as to avoid imbalances. Since the Western powers had a monopoly of the Middle

East arms market until 1955, they could virtually decide the military equilibrium by themselves.

It was obvious to me that with Arab opposition to Israel increasing, and the weight of our economic burdens growing heavy, Israel would have to broaden her relationship with the United States far beyond the scope of existing policies and agreements. And the economic problem would have the first priority. With hundreds of thousands of immigrants entering Israel in the first two or three years, there was a real danger that we would face starvation, lack of adequate housing and large-scale epidemics. If this were to occur, the exuberance of victory might well give way to disillusion and even to mass emigration.

The United States did not regard the Middle East as its central concern. The Korean War had erupted in July 1950. Large American forces were serving far from home in conditions of danger, only five years after the end of World War II. President Truman was at the height of his power and self-confidence. His sympathies with Israel had been tested under pressure, but there was no hint of effusiveness in his attitude and his friendship had to be carefully tended. The State Department, under the direction of the brilliant but frigid Dean Acheson, held Israel in very limited affection.

When I reached Washington, Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter told me cheerfully and with lengthy explanation that he could not think of two people more disparate in their backgrounds, the shape of their minds and the idioms of their speech than President Truman and myself. It was therefore inconceivable that I would reach a personal harmony with the President. With this encouraging news I began my work—and a strong mutual understanding was established with Truman almost at once. It began on the day that I presented my credentials. Guided by a bland and polished Chief of Protocol and mindful of European precedents, I arrived formally attired in a black homburg, a steel-gray tie and a morning suit, carrying President Weizmann's credentials in a huge envelope. I had a carefully written oration prepared for the ceremony. I entered the White House for the first of what was to be many dozens of occasions, and was struck at once by the noisy informality that swirled along the corridors. I was shown to the Oval Office. There was the President of the United States, seated behind his desk with his jacket off and stridently red suspenders in full view. When he came from behind the desk, I saw that he was wearing shoes of two colors, brown-and-white. Nothing less majestic could have been imagined.

Before I had time to adapt myself to the sudden informality, the President whipped my speech and credentials from my hand, gave me a copy of his own response, and with a withering look at the startled Chief of Protocol, said, "Let's cut out all the crap and have a good talk." We then spent forty minutes in a detailed discussion of events in the Middle East.

Truman was utterly candid, not hesitating to say, in the presence of the perspiring protocol officer, that most of the "striped-pants boys in the State Department are against my policy of supporting Israel." But, he added darkly, they'll "soon find out who's the President of the United States." He mitigated his sweeping judgment with a few words in praise of Dean Acheson, saying, "He looks cold but he is a sensitive guy really and as loyal as they come. He'll do what he thinks I want to be done. If necessary, he'll even pretend to like it." The President then asked tenderly after Weizmann and spent five minutes telling me exactly what I already knew about the dramatic meetings which saved the southern Negev for the partition plan. Before I departed, he asked me a few cautious and somewhat apprehensive questions about Ben Gurion, whom he had never met.

I went out of the presidential presence into the street and thence to my embassy office, somewhat dazed by the force of Truman's personality. I had not expected his air of self-reliance. I had imagined more diffidence and reserve. It seemed that the experience of winning the election in his own right had transformed his demeanor. I have always been willing to accept the New Testament prediction that "the meek shall inherit the earth," but I have often wondered whether, having inherited it, they would continue to be meek. Truman seemed to be sincerely exalted and, to be frank, a little inflated by his Office. He was living in constant wonder about what fate had done to him. I noticed how, even in our short conversation, he had found it necessary to remind me several times that he really was the President of the United States, although I had been acting on that assumption all the time. He was obsessed with the suspicion that some people in high places were still not taking his leadership at its full value.

Despite its modest outer shell, the embassy over which I came to preside was impressive in the quality of its manpower. The senior member was Moshe Keren, whom the *Ha'aretz* newspaper had lent us for a brief period of diplomatic service. (He was later to serve in London and in Germany, where he met a sudden death from heart failure.) The military attaché was my brother-in-law, Chaim Herzog, whose distinguished war record had been made in the defense of the approaches to Jerusalem. In charge of information was Harry Levine, later to be our ambassador to Denmark. There was also a large economic staff. Within a few months Teddy Kollek came out to be my deputy in the embassy as minister. Even then, his movements were restless and his instincts nomadic, so that he did not remain very long. In his wake came E. David Goitein, who was to become a judge on our Supreme Court, and later Reuven Shiloah and Yaacov Herzog. I have always welcomed and sought the challenge of able associates, and the Foreign Ministry responded well.

I opened my mission intensively with the accent on economic issues. Between September and December 1950, I had to negotiate an agricultural loan of $35 million from the Export-Import Bank. Early in 1951 I initiated discussions for a Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation in order to create a juridical framework within which our relationship was to evolve. In April 1951 I sought the aid of the United States, as one of the occupying powers, for Israel's efforts to secure a compensation agreement from Germany. At the same time, I approached Secretary Acheson and congressional leaders on behalf of Israel's inclusion in the economic-aid programs of the United States. In the late summer of 1951 I requested American support for Israel's case against Egypt on the Suez Canal blockade.

The multiplicity of these tasks became symptomatic of our Washington embassy through all the years of Israel's independence. At any given moment there are always several major problems on which the understanding of the American government is urgently needed. In almost every case there is no substitute for that support. The pressure of Israel's demands on the Administration is so intense that there is always a danger of exhausting our welcome by pressing too many cases too often and too hard. I thought that the best guarantee of success lay in the creation of a public sympathy that would take Israel out of the diplomatic routine and elevate it to a special place in American confidence. This meant that I had simultaneously to pursue contacts in Washington and take a leading share in bringing Israel's cause to millions of Americans. Between one meeting and another in the State Department, at the White House or on Capitol Hill, there would be many air or train journeys to address forums of American public opinion, or to bring Israel's message to Jewish communities. When to all of this I added the leadership of Israel's delegation at the United Nations, I find it hard in retrospect to understand how, even with a strong constitution, I could possibly have survived. Indeed, on two occasions in 1951, once in the Security Council and once at a meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma, I found myself delivering impassioned speeches after lack of sleep and on a completely empty stomach, with the result that my energy ebbed away and I briefly fainted. When this happened during a discussion in the Security Council about our contested irrigation rights, the alarm of my family and friends was shared by David Ben Gurion, who was then on his first official visit to the United States. He sent me a message suggesting that I take it easy, since, as he said blandly, "People like you are not to be found running round the streets."

Ben Gurion was triumphantly received in Washington and New York, and he established a sound relationship with Truman and other Administration leaders. He greatly preferred substantive discussions to ceremonial luncheons and dinners, which always seemed to fall short of smooth consummation. At a luncheon with Truman the first course was a pallid fish salad, of which Ben Gurion and I took small portions in order to leave room for the main course, which never came. It turned out that Truman was in an economizing mood and that in Missouri, lunch is a brief formality with the chief meal in the evening. We left Blair House famished. (The White House was undergoing repair.) I took Ben Gurion and his party to Harvey's Restaurant —renowned for its food. As we sat down, in trooped a procession of Truman's American guests, who had similar need of replenishment—Chief Justice Vinson, Secretary Acheson and the rest.

The next evening at our own embassy residence the fare was more abundant. But after the dessert I made repeated signs to Paula Ben Gurion indicating that she should rise to enable others to follow. Her response was to sink deep in her chair, and to my alarm, she seemed about to slide under the table. The Cabinet members, judges and senators coughed politely and remained seated. At last Paula surfaced like a diver reporting a rich bed of pearls and announced in triumphant Yiddish, "I've found my shoes!"

My activity was at feverish pace, and I suppose that the sustaining impulse came from the consciousness that Israel's security and development depended very greatly on the United States. Few ambassadors can feel that nearly everything they do matters. There was also a fortunate taste of early success. In the first two years of my mission, which coincided with the last period of the Truman Administration, almost everything that I attempted ended with good results. The Export-Import Bank granted its new loan, thus dissipating the fear that the first $100 million had been a one-time operation dictated by electoral motives. Secretary Acheson agreed to my request for American encouragement for the opening of our negotiations with the Federal Republic of Germany. The United States gave its support to Israel's case in the United Nations Security Council against Egypt on the Suez Canal blockade. Within a few months of my presentation of Israel's request for large-scale American aid, the Congress increased

President Truman's proposal to grant the astronomical sum of $73 million for the support of Israel's economy.

None of these tasks was easy. Much of my business was with Secretary Acheson. He was a complex and subtle figure. His outer elegance, a little too careful and refined, was the reflection of a precise intellect rather than a dandified pose. He was intolerant of excess in rhetoric or emotion. He liked everything to be in balance and in the lowest audible key. Perhaps he attached excessive weight to reason as a determining factor in the life of mankind. He sought shelter from the gusts of sentiment, passion and prejudice, by pretending that they were not blowing at all, or alternatively, that they would soon subside.

I encountered the special difficulty of communicating with him when I came with my old-time colleague David Horowitz to explain Israel's case on the duty of Germany to make some compensation for the Holocaust. In order to secure American support for this unprecedented idea, we would simply have to prove the unprecedented scope of our Jewish experience. I embarked on a short, vivid account of the Holocaust in terms of the atrocities inflicted on the victims—men, women and children. As I narrated the macabre details, I almost broke down under the weight of my own horrified emotion. There sat Acheson, his mustache bristling with defensive suspicion, draped in his chair as though in a deliberate effort to avoid creasing his perfectly tailored clothes. I felt that if I went on much longer without getting a response, the psychological atmosphere would become so explosive that I would have to get up and walk out of the room. Just when the breaking point was reached, he began to thaw. His reactions were now in tune with what his ears were absorbing, and he came as close to an expression of tenderness and grief as I ever saw from him before, or was to see again.

My problem in securing Israel's first entry into the American aid programs was more complex. At that time the main allocations of U.S. aid were closely related to America's anti-Communist alliances. The weight of commitment was to Western Europe. Israel was not a member of any of the regional or multinational organizations through which American aid generally flowed. Moreover, the dimensions of the assistance that we were seeking bore no relation to our population. President Truman, with all his sympathy, could not suggest more than $23 million for Israel's share of grant assistance. I had asked for over $100 million. Our only hope lay in the house of Congress. Truman's assistant, David K. Niles, gave me to understand that the President would not be offended if the Congress, which usually cut down his proposals, now took the exceptional step of enlarging them.

I worked closely with I. L. Kenen, whom I had brought to Washington as a lobbyist for three months; he was to stay, with excellent results, for twenty-five years. We decided on a technique which became traditional in Israel's work in Washington. My aim was to generate a bipartisan proposal in each house of Congress in favor of a special dimension of aid for Israel in view of our special role in the absorption of refugee immigrants.

One week in the hot summer of 1951 I approached two senators who represented the most authoritative forces in American politics: I asked Paul Douglas, a Democrat from Illinois, and the Republican leader, Robert Taft of Ohio, to present a resolution to the Senate in support of a very large appropriation for Israel. Senator Douglas, tall, white-haired, professorial, kindly, sentimental, was stretched out on a sofa, exhausted by the intensity of his own legislative efforts. As I explained the drama of Israel's ingathering—the arrival of Jews from the displaced persons' camps with their tattooed arms and their obsessive memories; the ecstatic reaction of Jews in Yemen and Iraq to the call of Israel's independence—I could see that he was moved. He pointed out, however, that a bipartisan effort would be necessary, and skeptically wished me "good luck with Taft."

In the office of the Senior Senator from Ohio, whose father had been Chief Justice and President of the United States, I had a different task to accomplish. Taft had a very stern exterior. Behind his rimless glasses, there was rarely any glint of warmth. His prejudices were sharp, and he was little inclined to bipartisan gestures. At a pinch he would probably have admitted that members of the Democratic Party could in some cases be patriotic, if misguided, Americans. But this was about as far as he was willing to go. He represented what remained of the isolationist, puritanical tradition in American thought. He did not like the idea of Americans spending money at home, much less abroad. He felt that not spending money had a high ethical value, like patriotism or marital fidelity. He was unlikely to react well to our hope of extracting tens of millions of dollars from American coffers.

With him I had an experience similar to that which I had undergone with Secretary Acheson. Under persuasion, provided that it was quiet and based on logical premises, his defensive demeanor could be pierced. For Taft, as for many Americans, Israel was not just another foreign country. He first explained why he was "in principle" against foreign aid. He did this so emphatically that I had a few twinges of despair. But, then, in sharp transition, he explained why "rules have exceptions." He thought that the exceptions were India and Israel. I was curious to know why we were paired with India, but I thought it better not to probe this too far. Israel seemed to move him through the courage of its Jewish recuperation, and also because its name elicited Biblical associations familiar from his early youth. He was too realistic not to know that nearly all the Jews in the United States had voted for the Democratic Party, but this was not an obstacle to his support. He had close contacts with some American Jewish leaders, especially with Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, his constituent in Ohio, who had obviously made a deep spiritual impression upon him. Within a week I had got Senators Taft and Douglas to sponsor a Senate resolution to which dozens of their colleagues adhered. There was probably no other cause in which such divergent partners could be brought together.

In the House of Representatives, my task was easier. The party leaders, Speaker John McCormack and Representative Joseph Martin, both from Massachusetts, had been enlisted for the Zionist cause many years before, largely through the efforts of Boston Zionists—especially of Elihu Stone, who represented the Zionist cause in the North.

When I reached Secretary Acheson to make our formal request, he said to me with resignation, "You are theoretically presenting your case to us today. But I know as well as you do that you have already seen Dave Niles, Paul Douglas and Robert Taft." The words were said without resentment but also without enthusiasm. It had become accepted that Israel's method of winning support deviated from traditional routines. It was, however, strictly legitimate in a pluralistic democratic system. An ambassador need be no more ashamed of invoking his country's assets in sympathetic opinion than of drawing attention to resources of oil, if it has any.

By the end of 1951 it was clear that Israel could rely on massive United States aid to help it on its road toward economic consolidation. The support given by Truman to our political struggle in 1948 had not been an isolated gesture. A tradition of alliance was growing up. There was no formal documentary expression of this partnership, but its stability was becoming impressive. With these successes behind us, I certainly had no reason to be disappointed with the early momentum of my mission in Washington. There was something concrete and substantial to do every day.

Most of my work was in Washington, but there were still tense occasions at the UN. Korea was the major concern of the Great Powers in those days; and to everyone's surprise, including my own, I suddenly found myself for a brief spasm of time in the center of that drama.

The *New York Times* of January 13, 1952, had a banner headline about an Israeli initiative for a cease-fire in Korea. How I became projected into this role has been vividly described by Lester Pearson, then Foreign Minister of Canada, in the second volume of his memoirs. The story is so exotic that I prefer to tell it in Pearson's words:

> *January 12, 1952 (Friday)*
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> *This morning [Gladwyn] Jebb telephoned me that he had been trying to arrange a sponsoring group for an endorsation resolution, but was having great difficulty. The Asians, or at least some of them, were anxious to be the exclusive sponsors, and were also anxious, he said, to amend the statement itself before it went to Peking, with a view to removing the stipulation that a cease-fire must actually take place before any negotiations begin. This, of course, is a fundamental part of the statement, and without it the Americans naturally will not support it. Apparently they, the Asians, have been influenced by [Indian Ambassador] Rau's interpretative remarks yesterday. . . .*
>
> *I then telephoned [Benegal] Rau to confirm, if possible, Jebb's fears. Rau was somewhat reassuring. He said that it is true the Asians had been talking about the question of a resolution and its sponsorship, and had come to the conclusion that the sponsors should not include any country which had forces fighting in Korea, and the Chinese might use this as an excuse to state that the resolution and the statement were primarily for the purpose of extricating such forces from their present difficulties. I told Rau that this seemed to me to be not unreasonable, and I suggested to him that he use his influence to have a resolution sponsored by four or five countries, such as Mexico, Sweden, Syria, Burma, and possibly Indonesia. Rau said that he would try to do this . . .*
>
> *I passed this on to Jebb and he seemed to think that sponsorship by countries not fighting in Korea would be satisfactory, and he agreed to try to get agreement on that basis. He was having a meeting for this purpose at noon.*
>
> *This meeting was apparently not able to work out any satisfactory arrangement, so later in the afternoon, at Jebb's suggestion, and apparently as a last resort, Rau persuaded [Abba] Eban (then Israel's Permanent Representative to the UN) to introduce the sponsoring resolution alone. Eban did this at the end of the afternoon, and it will be discussed tomorrow.*
>
> *January 13, 1952 (Saturday)*
>
> *Everything should have gone smoothly today, but the contrary was the case. The difficulty arose over the fact that the resolution*

sponsoring the statement and referring it to Peking "for their observations" has been sponsored by Israel. This was enough to arouse the ire and opposition of the Arabs, who, one after another this morning, recanted their earlier decision of approval, and began to find fault with the resolution. This gave encouragement to other doubters, and when, by the end of the morning, amendments were submitted by El Salvador and Dr. Tsiang [Nationalist Chinese Permanent Representative to the UN], which would have completely destroyed the statement (one would have substituted Nationalist China for Communist China), things looked dreary and discouraging. Something had to be done during the lunch hour, and done quickly. As soon as we adjourned, I saw Malik of the Lebanon, who had been leading the Arab filibuster, and tried to persuade him to adopt a more reasonable course; not to allow Arab hostility to Israel to wreck a course of action which they themselves had warmly supported. Malik said that the Arabs were having a meeting during the lunch hour and he would see what he could do to straighten things out.

I then got hold of Eban, Jebb, and Padilla Nervo of Mexico, who, with Riddell and myself, went to the Hidden House (an appropriate place) for lunch and discussion. Nervo came up with an ingenious idea. He suggested that we abandon all discussion of the Israel resolution and get back to the statement of the Cease-Fire Group, which should be put to the committee by the chairman as a document on which we would vote, first for and against. After all, it was the first item on our agenda! This would do two things. It would remove the Israel-Arab difficulty, and also avoid the necessity of voting on any amendments. It was essential to do this latter, because [U.S. Ambassador] Austin had told me before lunch that he could not vote against any amendment to substitute Nationalist China for Communist China. American abstention on this issue in any vote before the committee would, of course, wreck our statement, because it would confirm Chinese suspicions that the Americans were trying to trick them.

Nervo also promised to persuade the chairman as to the rightness of this course, and Eban agreed that if the statement of principles was carried, he would withdraw all of his resolution except that paragraph which referred the statement to Peking.

At 3:00 o'clock, therefore, Nervo raised his point of order, the chairman accepted it, and, somewhat cavalierly, put the statement of principles to the vote at once without discussion and without amendment. It was carried against the protest of several members over what they considered—and not without some reason—arbitrary and unconstitutional procedure. However, the main thing is that fifty delegations voted for the statement. Then after a long wrangle . . . the Norwegians put forward a short resolution, simply

> *asking the Secretary-General to transmit the document to Peking. Eban, therefore, withdrew his own resolution completely. The Norwegian resolution was carried and there were only one or two more hurdles to overcome. Now we can sit back and see what happens in Peking during the next few days. And I can go to Ottawa.*

I had simply passed my initiative to Norway to avoid Arab trouble. A text proposed by Israel would have been opposed by the Arabs, whereas exactly the same text under the name "Norway" was accepted. The lesson of this episode is that Israel has a potential role in international conciliation, which Arab hostility is able to frustrate. In today's United Nations, statesmen like Gladwyn, Jebb, Benegal Rau and Lester Pearson, knowing this situation, would probably not even trouble to involve Israel's aid to resolve crises in the parliamentary arena.

The fact remained that a vast transition had taken place in our national status, and I did not want the exaltation to subside after three years. The theme of transition figured in most of the speeches that I made to audiences around the United States in those years. I was anxious lest amid the trappings of sovereignty we and our friends should lose a sense of wonder at Israel's sudden rebirth.

In May I spoke at a dinner in Washington in which Israel honored President Truman, who had by then announced his decision not to attempt a further period of office. I thought it appropriate to record a tribute to him:

> *We do not have orders or decorations. Our material strength is small and greatly strained. We have no tradition of formality or chivalry. One thing, however, is within the power of Israel to confer. It is the gift of immortality. Those whose names are bound up with Israel's history never become forgotten. We are, therefore, now writing the name of President Truman upon the map of our country. In a village of farmers near the airport of Lydda at the gateway to Israel, we establish a monument, not of dead stone but of living hope. Thus, when the eyes of men alight on Truman Village in Israel, they will pause in their successive generations to recall the strong chain which, at the middle of the 20th century, drew the strongest and the smallest democracies together with imperishable links.*

As I left the rostrum I saw the tough-minded President burying his face in a handkerchief without any effort to restrain his emotion. The next day he sent me a letter asking for a text of my address:

"You spoke so flatteringly about me that for a moment I had the impression that I was dead."

By now I was finding the zest of Washington more rewarding than endless debates in the United Nations. But during the autumn session of the General Assembly in 1952 I was in the center of two UN occasions. The first was to mark the death of President Weizmann after a long and agonizing illness, for the greater part of which he was totally incapacitated. It was the end of a whole era in Jewish history. The General Assembly of the United Nations, in accordance with its practice, held a session of mourning called by its president, Lester Pearson. The Arab delegates were absent. They could not show any human feeling toward an adversary even in death. When Pearson summoned me to the rostrum, I made an improvised speech of two minutes in which I said of Weizmann:

> *He led Israel for forty years across a wilderness of martyrdom and anguish, of savage oppression and frustrated hope, across the sharpest agony which has ever beset the life of any people, and at the end of his days, he entered in triumph upon his due inheritance of honor as the first President of Israel, the embodiment in modern times of that kingly and prophetic tradition which once flourished in Israel and became an abiding source of light and redemption for succeeding generations of men. During years of deep darkness and little hope, we looked with pride upon his erect and majestic bearing, his dignity of mind and spirit, his scientific intellect refined and ordered as a cultivated garden, and his profound moral influence in every free country on the best brains and spirits of his age.*

When I came down from the rostrum Dean Acheson, Anthony Eden and Andrei Vyshinsky came from their places to shake my hand, Eden positively glowing with elegance and international authority. For a short period in the thirties he had been my boyhood hero: the lonely resister of dictators. He now took me aside for some reminiscences about his relations with Weizmann during World War II. I thought that his praise was somewhat belated, for in the dark period of Jewish catastrophe, Churchill's efforts to help our cause had received very little support from the Foreign Office under Eden's command. But in later years, after the 1956 Suez crisis, this subtle and complex British statesman was to ally himself strongly with Israel's cause. (For a time he was chairman of the Conservative Party's Israel Committee.)

A week after Weizmann's death I received an astonishing telephone call from Ben Gurion. He said that the Israeli presidency was symbolic, but our national history and faith attached great importance to symbols. Weizmann's life had conveyed a double message of statesmanship and science. The presidency could no longer express an active statesmanship, but there was an opportunity to symbolize Israel's special attachment to scientific humanism. The government wanted me to approach Albert Einstein and offer him the presidency of Israel!

I had hardly managed to digest the audacity of this idea before the wire services brought the news from Israel that Ben Gurion's idea had already been published. I doubted if this would make an impossible task any easier, and I was soon proved right. My telephone rang and an agitated voice came on the line from Princeton, New Jersey. I found myself talking to the author of the relativity theory, who was addressing me in very absolute terms. Would I please remove the idea from Ben Gurion's head? The plan was absolutely out of the question. All that Einstein asked of me was to explain how honored he was, but also how firm his refusal would be.

I realized that his shock was genuine and that his refusal was irrevocable. I added, however, that I found it hard to accept the rejection of the Israeli presidency in a telephone call; I would like to receive a written statement of his reply. A few days later Einstein sent me a letter signed in German and English. My letter and his reply follow:

November 17, 1952

Dear Professor Einstein:

The bearer of this letter is Mr. David Goitein of Jerusalem who is now serving as Minister at our Embassy in Washington. He is bringing you the question which Prime Minister Ben Gurion asked me to convey to you, namely, whether you would accept the Presidency of Israel if it were offered you by a vote of the Knesset. Acceptance would entail moving to Israel and taking its citizenship. The Prime Minister assures me that in such circumstances complete facility and freedom to pursue your great scientific work would be afforded by a government and people who are fully conscious of the supreme significance of your labors.

Whatever your inclination or decision may be, I should be deeply grateful for an opportunity to speak with you again within the next day or two at any place convenient for you. I understand the anxieties and doubts which you expressed to me this evening. On the other hand, whatever your answer, I am anxious for you to feel that the Prime Minister's question embodies the deepest respect which the Jewish people can repose in any of its sons.

Therefore, whatever your response to this question, I hope that you will think generously of those who have asked it, and will commend the high purposes and motives which prompted them to think of you at this solemn hour in our people's history.

With cordial personal wishes,

Yours respectfully,
Abba Eban

Dear Ambassador Eban:

I feel deeply moved by the offer of our State, Israel, though also sad and abashed that it is impossible for me to accept this offer. Since all my life I have been dealing with the world of objects I have neither the natural ability nor the experience necessary to deal with human beings and to carry out official functions. For these reasons I do not feel able to fulfill the requirements of this great task, even were my advanced age not to limit my strength to an increasing extent.

This situation is indeed extremely sad for me because my relation to the Jewish people has become my strongest human attachment ever since I reached complete awareness of our precarious position among the nations.

After we have lost in recent days the man who, among adverse and tragic circumstances, bore on his shoulders for many years the whole burden of leadership of our striving for independence from without, I wish from all my heart that a man be found who by his life's work and his personality may dare to assume this difficult and responsible task.

(signed) Albert Einstein

Princeton, N.J.
November 18, 1952

I have often reflected on Einstein's reference to the request of "our State, Israel" (*unseres Staates Israel*). The simplicity of this identification seemed to smash through the tormented semantics which induced so many Diaspora Jews, especially in America, to address Israel in the third person, through fear of multiple allegiance.

This was not my last contact with Einstein. A few weeks later he came to share the dais with me at the annual dinner of the Weizmann Institute of Science in the Waldorf-Astoria Ballroom. He was attired in fairly immaculate evening dress, except for the complete and conspicuous absence of socks. I assumed, wrongly, that he was fulfilling the conventional stereotype of a professor. Since he was the most eminent of all professors, he was surely entitled to set a record of absent-mindedness. In conversation he explained to me that this was not so. He knew perfectly well what he was doing. He was quite simply devoted to rationality. He did not like doing things which had no empirical or logical explanation. There was no scientific way of proving that it was necessary or useful to wear both socks and shoes. One of these acts could be justified by the need to cover the feet; two of them seemed redundant. If I could refute what he had said, he would consider changing his habitual conduct.

I decided not to attempt another unsuccessful exercise in persuasion, this time in a matter on which I had no strong feelings one way or another. A year or two later I went to Princeton to address the Student Union. It was a murderously cold and windy night. I had been warned that Princeton was attended by many Arab students, pupils of the Arab historian Phillip Hitti, who would probably heckle me mercilessly in the question period. When I approached the microphone to launch my oration, the door at the back opened and the august figure of Albert Einstein came quietly to a place near the front, where also two young Israelis on leave from a course at Harvard were sitting—Shimon Peres and Aharon Remez. Einstein's entry seemed to cast a spell of deference on the whole assembly, and the Arab students were reduced to a paralyzed silence. After my address Einstein came to shake my hand. I asked him why he had taken the trouble to honor the gathering on so cold a night. He replied, "I am interested in the ambassador of a small state. Powerful states need no ambassadors. Their force speaks for themselves. For small states it matters how they express themselves. What you are doing matters. Good night."

I duly went on "expressing myself" on matters of Israel's security. Three years after they were concluded, the armistice agreements were proving their durability. On the other hand, no real progress toward peace was being made. Israel was under constant attack on issues, the solution of which would have been feasible if the Arabs had been willing to negotiate a peace settlement. This was to be our dilemma across the years. On the one hand, they demanded that we solve problems which only a peace settlement could solve. On the other hand, they refused a peace negotiation. I therefore asked the Israel government for permission to launch a peace offensive at the General Assembly by attempting to get a majority for the principle of direct negotiations. In an address entitled "A Blueprint for Peace," delivered on December 11, 1952, I said: "If we refuse to seek new solutions of old deadlocks, we shall be living far below the level of our responsibilities and opportunities. . . . Nobody can help Israel and the Arab states to solve problems which they will not discuss freely and directly between themselves."

I then proposed a detailed agenda for a negotiation involving a transition from armistice to peace; the negotiation of final boundaries; a regional plan for the absorption and resettlement of refugees; and a system of cooperation creating an "open region" in which there would be a concerted attempt to bring about an economic renaissance in the Middle East. I called for free ports, mutual access to air and sea communications, and an intensive process of human exchange.

"Blueprint for Peace" evoked a good response. The delegations of Canada, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, the Netherlands, Norway, Panama and Uruguay sponsored a resolution calling for the kind of negotiated settlement for which I had argued. The United States, France and Britain indicated their support. We achieved a good majority despite Arab opposition in the Ad Hoc Political Committee. Had we been able to maintain that result in the plenary session, we would have weakened the Arab argument that peace in the future had to be based on the unfulfilled resolutions of 1947. Unhappily, within the few days between the committee and plenary stages, Ben Gurion published an interview with Cyrus Sulzberger in the *New York Times* in which he spoke contemptuously of any international interest in Jerusalem. He said simply that Jerusalem was no different than Washington, Paris and London. This was not strictly true even in Israeli jurisprudence, since we had always proposed a special status for the Holy Places. The result of the interview was that several Catholic countries, headed by the Philippines, withdrew their support from the Eight Power resolution on the grounds that they would be called upon to acquiesce in Ben Gurion's denial of Jerusalem's universal significance. Ben Gurion's interview was quite coincidental in its timing and had no relevance to our international struggle at that time. The resolutions being discussed in the General Assembly made no demands on us in relation to Jerusalem.

Another significant reason for our reduced vote in the plenary was that the Soviet Union ominously passed from abstention to opposition. This was the first time since Israel had been established that a Soviet vote on an Arab-Israel issue had been diametrically opposed to our position. Although we still had a majority for the text on direct negotiations in the plenary, we fell short of what was then regarded as the statutory two thirds. (It was to take nearly twenty years for a UN body to agree—in October 1973—that the conflict must be resolved by "negotiation.")

By this time it was clear to me that the atmosphere of my work in

Washington was going to change. The Truman Administration was in the last stages of its life. Throughout the summer all embassies in Washington had closely followed the electoral campaign. There was little else for most of them to do. Early in 1952 I had made a visit to Chicago on behalf of the Israel Bond Organization. I was to be the main speaker at a mass meeting in one of the city's largest arenas. As was now usual, the governor of the state presented me to the audience. By now I had become accustomed, and I hope immune, to the extravagent eulogy of which I was the target on occasions such as these. I had often alluded to the danger lest a public speaker come to believe what his chairmen said about him and thus become totally unfit for any future human intercourse. On this occasion my ears and heart were arrested after the first few sentences. The governor of Illinois was speaking with a felicity of phrase and spirit unusual in American political oratory. His words rang with a sensitive idealism and were held together with bonds of restraint.

The speaker was Adlai E. Stevenson; I had never seen him before. He seemed out of tune with the strident politics of the American Midwest. We met afterward for an hour and got on well together, except that I obviously had sharper passions and prejudices and a more militant partisanship than he seemed to show. I thought that he had too much understanding of opposing views to be firm about his own.

A few weeks later, when President Truman announced his refusal to run for office again, Stevenson's name burst upon the American public. I followed his dignified and rather sad demeanor as he entered the boisterous electoral arena at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in July. Suzy and I sat up late in the night in our Washington home when his graceful and somber acceptance speech came across the television screen.

It was obvious that Stevenson's chances of victory were small against General Dwight Eisenhower. Eisenhower's contact with our cause had been superficial. Yet it included something which Ben Gurion was never to forget—a reaction of cold fury to the horrors of Nazism which unfolded before him when the forces under his command entered the concentration camps. The violence of his resentment at Hitlerist oppression was enhanced by the compassion with which he set about rehabilitating the emaciated figures stalking through the camps. But of the Zionist enterprise and Israel's resurgence, he seemed to know little.

In February 1952 Sharett and I, feeling that he might become important to our cause, had visited him at his NATO headquarters in Paris. He was buoyant, authoritative, pink-cheeked—and astonishingly fluent in speech without, however, being completely coherent. The words poured out of him without hesitation but did not always fit into sentences. I felt charitably, but I think accurately, that his mind was richer than his capacities of expression. I was also impressed by his phlegmatic temperament. While Sharett and I were explaining our problems to him, the telephone rang with the news that King George VI had died in London a few minutes before. He asked to be excused, went out of the room, supervised the removal of all the NATO countries' flags to half-mast, came back, sat down and resumed our conversation at the precise point at which it had been broken off. I found this display of normality disconcerting. After all, the dead monarch had been his close friend, associated with the most important epochs of his life.

The fear that he might lack emotional range was confirmed in our later encounters, but it was hard to be unimpressed by his air of authority. Eisenhower's lack of precision and some degree of indolence in him were counterbalanced by a dominant will. As we went out to our car I said to Sharett, "He will usually get what he wants; the question is whether he will always know what he wants."

In the November 1952 election, Eisenhower won his sweeping victory. I could not attend his somewhat imperial inauguration ceremony in January, since bereavement struck my home. Our first daughter, Meira, was born in mid-December. Three weeks later, when I was in New York for conversations with Trygve Lie after the end of the General Assembly, I came to my office at 11 East Seventieth Street, to be told by Regina Medzini, my secretary, that I should speak to my wife in Washington immediately on the telephone. I received the staggering news that Meira was dead—the victim of one of those unexplained and spontaneous crib deaths which strike so many children without known cause. Suzy and I left Washington for Florida to try to come to terms with our grief, leaving the embassy in the capable hands of David Goitein.

Returning sadly to Washington for the last week of Truman's "lame duck" period, I found that the duck was not all that lame, after all. Truman intended to act with full presidential powers up to the last minute of his tenure. On the very eve of transferring his office somewhat irascibly to his successor, he signed approval for another Export-Import Bank loan which I had negotiated the previous autumn.

But new ideas were now at work in American policy. The Egyptian monarch had been overthrown by a group of officers headed by Colonels Mohammed Naguib and Gamal Abdul Nasser. Leading members of the Democratic Administration, including Acheson and W. Averell Harriman, were considering the idea of strengthening American influence by the sale of arms to some Arab states, including Egypt.

I thought that it would be ironical for the Truman Administration to end its career in this way. I argued tenaciously with Acheson and mobilized as many influences in the White House and on Capitol Hill as I could. In the end Acheson said to me wearily, "Well, I don't see why we shouldn't bequeath some headaches to our successors."

It was sad but impressive to see Truman on the television screen getting on a train for Independence, Missouri. American democracy is at its best in its talent for the transfer of power. The little tough-spoken haberdasher looked like a simple man who had played at being a potentate and was now awakening to his modest reality. But there was nothing modest about the dimensions of his achievement. He had given democracy, peace and social equality a robust and defiant protection. In the next few years I was to see him often, vainly attempting to get him to come to be idolized in Israel. I gathered that his wife, Bess, had been reluctant about every ten miles that she had ever traveled from Missouri, and now that it was not obligatory, there was no chance of it happening. Truman went on exemplifying the simple unpretentious qualities and style of Middle America. But he had given millions of ordinary men a brief glimpse of their potentiality, and had made them proud to be ordinary.

Truman's Administration ended with the question of arms for Egypt in abeyance. But not for long. By the end of January I was visiting an unfamiliar State Department, now headed by John Foster Dulles, who was certain that he could achieve more in the Middle East than his predecessors.

The years 1953 to 1956 are a gloomy period in our national recollection. Israelis who are impressed by the intensity of our problems today would do well to recall the extraordinary gravity of our situation at that time. The Soviet Union launched the anti-Semitic trial of Jewish doctors on the preposterous grounds that they had tried to poison their patients. It was the last fling of Stalin's madness. Soviet hostility to Israel developed to the point of breaking diplomatic relations in February 1953. America, far from redressing the balance, compounded our solitude by embarking on what Dulles called a "new look." This meant a determined effort to strengthen America's influence in the Arab world and to play down its intimacy with Israel. Across our borders with Jordan, Syria and Egypt came a constant torrent of violence, with military units and marauders, organized under the name of *fedayeen,* bringing mutilation and death to our civilians in frontier areas and sometimes into the heart of the coastal plain. Israeli forces often went into action to deter and stem the violence. But there would usually be a heavy toll of Arab life, indignant Arab appeals to the Security Council, and condemnatory resolutions against Israel which encouraged Arab governments to repeat their attacks in a vicious circle of escalating tension. Sometimes, as in a raid in Kibya in October 1953, the Israeli reaction was regarded by most Israelis as excessive. The United States opposed our retaliations without suggesting an alternative method of defending our lives. The idea that Arabs could kill Israelis without any subsequent Israeli reaction was close to becoming an international doctrine.

Israel's anguish in the nightmare years 1954–1956 was not limited to the inflamed borders alone. The conflict now lost its local character and eventually became caught up in the tangle of global rivalry. A turning point came when the Soviet Union authorized a massive arms transaction with Egypt through Czechoslovakia. Weapons of a destructive capacity hitherto unknown in the Middle East poured into Egypt at a rate beyond all previous experience. Israel saw itself faced by dangers far greater than those involved in the daily border attacks. Its long-term security was in serious question. The balance of power in the Middle East would now be a function of East-West relations. There was urgent need for the West to demonstrate to an excited Arab world that the Middle East was not going to become a uniquely Soviet preserve and that Israel would not be suffered to fall into relative weakness. The new crisis could have been cheaply overcome by modest reinforcement of Israeli arms, a convincing effort to strengthen the authority of the armistice frontiers and a clarification of American support of Israel's integrity and independence. Instead of this, London and Washington kept making allusions to Israeli concessions, thus giving the armistice lines an aspect of doubtful legitimacy. Secretary of State Dulles increased Israeli nervousness by concluding regional defense treaties, such as the Baghdad Pact in 1954. This had the effect of leaving Israel as the only country not integrated into a formal defense system and lacking a contractual basis for military supplies.

This accumulation of clouds abroad was accompanied by a weakening of national resolution at home. The politics of purpose gave way to the politics of fatigue. Symptomatic of this trend was Ben Gurion's resignation from the premiership at the end of 1953. He had every right to be tired. While he was a buoyant, vigorous, pugnacious, defiant man who sent out sparks of energy in all directions, for over two decades he had carried heavy burdens. The first four years of independence, with their inspiring hopes and horrifying risks, must have taken a greater toll of him than most of us realized. He felt a sharp dissatisfaction with some elements in Israeli life. The intensity of parliamentary warfare, the fragmentation of the electoral system, the need to be always conciliating small groups in order to maintain a coalition—all these were repellent to his active and dominant nature.

Unfortunately, his surrender of responsibility to his successor Moshe Sharett was neither chivalrous nor wholehearted. He made it clear that his departure was temporary, and he established what was in effect an alternative government in Sdeh Boker, a Negev kibbutz to which Israeli leaders made pilgrimage in search not only of inspiration but of concrete direction. Few strong leaders are enthusiastic about their successors, and Ben Gurion's lack of regard for Sharett was not even veiled. It was stark naked. As if this were not enough to undermine Sharett's limited resources of self-confidence and authority, there came the appointment of Pinchas Lavon to head the Defense Ministry. Lavon was a man of acute intellectual power with a progressive vision of Israel's social destiny. But in the defense establishment he was largely concerned to prove his militant virility so as to live down a reputation for pacifism. The result was that he reacted almost hysterically to our global dangers, and sponsored military plans of such violence that even hard-headed soldiers like the Chief of Staff, Moshe Dayan, felt obliged to resist them. Lavon also had an original conception of Cabinet government, according to which the Prime Minister had no responsibilities at all in the domain of national security.

All in all, it is difficult for Ben Gurion's biographers, however pious, to praise either the timing of his leave of absence or his manner of carrying it into effect. Sharett, Ben Gurion and Lavon now constituted three separate centers of executive authority, and the fabric of Israel's political structure was torn apart. We had all the unsettling effects of a Prime Minister's resignation without the balancing advantage of a new, clear-cut leadership. The steep decline of immigration to a mere trickle in 1952, 1953 and 1954 added to the general disillusion. For mass immigration had given Israel's first years a special exaltation, calling forth deep impulses of solidarity, resourcefulness and self-sacrifice. Now this light was eclipsed. "When sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions."

To be Israel's ambassador in Washington and to the United Nations in those days was clearly no prescription for a relaxed life. Israel's difficulties were the only possessions that nobody was trying to take away. I made a definition of my aims: in Washington to strive for a viable, if not an affectionate relationship with the Eisenhower Administration; at the United Nations to use the international platform to give some special resonance to Israel's cause; in American Jewry to create around my embassy and myself an atmosphere of solidarity and confidence; and in the general arena of American opinion to break out of diplomatic confinement so as to become a spokesman of a cause to which most Americans might be able to respond. My vocation was to develop an American-Israeli tradition based on a public sympathy that might transcend, and sometimes correct, the direction of official policy.

My main task was a dialogue with John Foster Dulles, who was clearly going to be the architect of American policy. No Secretary of State can give constant personal care to more than a few problems among the global abundance; and Dulles, unlike Acheson before him, found intellectual fascination in an issue that seemed to bore his predecessor to death. Christian fundamentalists may be attracted or repelled by Jewish history; they are very seldom indifferent to it. In general, I welcomed this upgrading of our problem. The higher the level on which our issues were discussed, the greater was our chance of at least a minimal understanding. President Truman had not erred in telling me frankly that in his experience the State Department officials found it difficult to absorb the idea of a Jewish state. Our claims fell beyond the bureaucratic routine. Civil servants, trained to think in general categories, were impatient with the particular elements of Israeli personality. Assistant Secretary of State Henry A. Byroade even suggested, grotesquely, that Israel should abandon its universal Jewish solidarities so as to become just "another Middle Eastern state." I hoped that Dulles with his larger view and his religious temperament would discern those aspects of Israel's policy that flowed from its unique history.

In my confrontation with Dulles I was aided by the fact that I had taken the trouble to keep contact with him while he was in the wilderness. The corporation lawyer, disappointed in his ambition in 1948, still hankered after a public role. I had made some visits to Wall Street in the years 1949–1953 to exchange views with him. He seemed surprised by this attention. Why should a busy ambassador bother with a man who had no power and little influence? I had the feeling that in my place he would not have risked his time with anyone who was not "in." In later years he never forgot that I had shown an interest in him when he was still "unhonored and unsung." He was a complex personality, physically shy and clumsy, but full of intellectual self-confidence. He was able to pass from moral elevation to an extraordinary deviousness and back again with little visible transition. He was marked by a thin and achromatic spirituality; but whatever was thought of him, I knew that nobody would count as much as he in determining our international position for the next decade, and I was resolved to find a way to his mind and heart.

The change in Soviet policy was hesitant. The break in diplomatic relations had come after an irresponsible bomb explosion in the Soviet embassy at Ramat Gan during a period when demonstrations were being held against the trial of Jewish doctors in Moscow. There was no objective reason for charging the Israeli government with guilt for this episode. Nothing could have served our national interest less. Assiduous efforts were made to repair the political damage, and by July 1953, with Stalin dead and embalmed, diplomatic relations had been restored on the strength of a Soviet explanation that the USSR wished "to have good relations with all states, irrespective of differences of policy and ideology." Throughout 1953 the Soviet Union took a passive attitude in all Security Council debates. After the Kibya raid the Western powers joined in a resolution of condemnation that took no account at all of previous Arab provocations. I assumed that the Soviet Union would join this criticism as a matter of course, but I dutifully lobbied the Soviet delegate Andrei Vyshinsky like other delegates to the Council. To my surprise and relief he listened impassively, and the Soviet Union alone abstained.

At the end of the year, however, the Security Council debated a complaint by Syria against Israeli water development in the demilitarized zone on the Syrian border at Bnot Yaakov Bridge. This was a frivolous complaint. There was no doubt about the legitimacy of peaceful economic development in the demilitarized zone, despite a conflict of view about sovereignty or jurisdiction. After many weeks a compromise was worked out under which the resumption of the irrigation work could be authorized by the United Nations Chief of Staff, subject to his understanding that there would be no damage to Arab water rights. I thought that I had done well to get this text accepted by the Western powers, and my own government in Jerusalem reluctantly agreed. But in February 1954 the Soviet Union vetoed this resolution. Vyshinsky explained ingeniously that no resolution deserved support unless it had the agreement both of Israel and the Arab states. This, however, turned out to be a euphemism. It was Arab and not Israeli consent that the Soviet Union regarded as a condition for allowing resolutions to pass the Security Council.

From that day on, the Security Council was closed to Israel as a court of appeal or redress. Arabs could kill Israeli citizens across the border, blockade our port of Eilat, close the Suez Canal to our shipping, send armed groups into our territory for murder and havoc, and decline to carry out stipulated clauses of the armistice agreement in the complete certainty that the Security Council would not adopt even the mildest resolution of criticism. Sometimes the veto was actually used by the Soviet Union against majority resolutions. At other times the anticipation of it prevented the majority from submitting any texts which gave support to Israel's interests. On the other hand, there was no such inhibition to resolutions criticizing Israel for retaliating against attacks. Thus, the doctrine of the United Nations came to imply that Arab governments could conduct warfare and maintain belligerency against Israel while Israel could offer no response. It was a picturesque jurisprudence and did not lack originality. What was remarkable was the apathy with which the world resigned itself to its perpetuation.

The precise reasons for the abrupt change of Soviet policy in 1953 have never been conclusively established. The most frivolous but prevalent version is that which attributes it to Israel's support of the American case against the invasion of South Korea. This is plain nonsense. The validity of the theory is destroyed by the fact that the Soviet Union took no vengeful attitude against dozens of other states that voted with the United States on this issue, including some members of the Arab group. Moreover, our vote on Korea was taken in mid-1950, and it was not until three years later that Soviet support of the Arab cause became blatant and consistent.

The truth is that Soviet policy in this as in other areas was largely determined by factors outside the Middle Eastern dispute. It arose from developments in the East-West relationship during the intensification of the Cold War. Moscow felt that it now had a good chance of winning the support of the new Arab regimes, whereas any idea that Israel could become anti-Western was inconceivable in view of the nature of our institutions and our strong links with American Jews. The new Egyptian regime had begun to make anti-Western noises: it seemed to be on the point of expelling British forces from its territory, and it strongly opposed attempts to bring Arab countries into a Western-sponsored alliance. For Moscow this marked a sudden gain in the international power balance. The Soviet Union had supported Israel in 1948 because we were the most active agent in the expulsion of British power. A similar Arab attitude toward Britain and her allies in 1954 elicited a pro-Arab attitude in Moscow. It was not accidental that the USSR chose the Bnot Yaakov project as the occasion for expressing its new attitude. Israel's work in the demilitarized zone was linked with a water development scheme sponsored by President Eisenhower through his emissary, Eric Johnston. The Soviet Union by its veto could therefore achieve a double aim: to arouse Arab sympathy, and to impede a tendency of the United States to play the leading role in political conciliation and economic development in the Middle East.

In personal terms, the effect of this darkening Soviet horizon was considerable. In the first four years of my leadership of the Israeli delegation at the UN, I had grown used to close cooperation with

Soviet representatives. Gromyko, Tsarapkin, Malik and Vyshinsky were familiar colleagues in many debates and negotiations. Contrary to the general belief, Soviet diplomats are not coldly inhuman in their diplomatic relations. Although their social occasions were formal, my discussions with them around UN tables and at their headquarters on Park Avenue were very cordial. I also learned something about the methodology of Soviet diplomacy. For example, I have mentioned the tendency for meetings in New York to be held very late at night. This meant that it was early the next morning at the Kremlin, so that our discussions with Soviet diplomats could be followed immediately by their own consultation with their capital. At that time Soviet representatives showed a great interest in the Israeli social adventure. I remember some of them coming to our own mission on East Seventieth Street to see films portraying our development, including life in the kibbutzim, which Malik and Tsarapkin constantly compared to the Russian kolkhoz. But during the months of rupture in diplomatic relations, Soviet ambassadors who had exchanged many vodka-laden dinners with me, would pass by me at the UN as though I did not exist.

When relations were resumed in July 1953, our contacts again became correct although without quite renewing the warmth of the earlier period. On one occasion Vyshinsky explained to me in detail that there was nothing subjective or emotional about the Soviet attitude. International policies were governed by "interests" and not by "sentiments." In his view, an Israeli policy of nonidentification or equilibrium was not dialectically possible, if only because Israel depended economically on the United States. It could not, in the Soviet view, take a really independent attitude. Moscow could not easily grasp the possibility of an equal relationship between a Great Power and a small country to which it gives aid. Whenever Israel seemed to be in conflict with the United States, the Soviet Union reacted with incredulity. It tended to believe that our show of independence was a well-staged pretense.

There might have been some grounds for hoping that the Soviet pressure on Israel would result in the United States giving us greater encouragement. The opposite was the case. If the USSR was out to win more support in Egypt and other Arab capitals, the American answer would be to compete for Arab affections. The United States thus collided with us head-on. When Israel defied a UN order to suspend water development at Bnot Yaakov in the north and the United States supported the Arabs, a violent furor arose in the American Jewish community. The Republican candidate for the mayoralty of New York found himself in desperate straits because of Administration policy.

Jewish leaders converged on the White House, and on a memorable day Dulles dispatched Henry Byroade to my hotel in New York to implore me to agree on an immediate statement signaling the resumption of American financial aid to Israel. It was the only occasion on which I was pressured by a foreign government to receive and not to relinquish something. Yet, we felt cold solitude, alleviated only by strong support in American public opinion. I was invited to the state legislatures of Ohio, Colorado, New Jersey and Massachusetts, where moving resolutions were adopted strengthening Israel's spirit in the face of Soviet hostility.

The year 1954 ended as bleakly as it had begun. We had made little progress in securing American understanding of our right of self-defense. After an Israeli raid at Beit Liqya in response to assaults in Jerusalem, the United States declared that while infiltration from Jordan constituted a serious problem, "Israel's apparent policy of armed retaliation had increased rather than diminished tension along the armistice lines." Whether there would really have been any less tension if Israel had fatalistically sat back and let its citizens be killed without any response is moot. Since no such experiment in national masochism has ever been tried by any country, we shall never know the answer.

After the Kibya raid in October 1953, I formally proposed a thorough review of the armistice agreement with Jordan in accordance with Article XII. This provided that if after a year from March 1949 either signatory asked the Secretary-General to convene a conference with the other party to review or revise the agreement, attendance was mandatory. Dag Hammarskjöld, who had succeeded Trygve Lie as Secretary-General, reluctantly but correctly turned to Amman, received a refusal to attend the "mandatory" conference, and there the matter ended. With the Security Council blocked by veto, with the Armistice Commissions ineffective and a review of the armistice agreement illegally refused, Israel seemed to have nothing left but deterrence by armed response. This was tried with little effect.

At home, the unfortunate Moshe Sharett, beleaguered by political intrigues, strove to achieve some international success. Yet he could not always hold out against demands for military action. He authorized an operation in Gaza in February 1955. In the previous six months there had been forty armed clashes and twenty-seven Egyptian raids into our territory, with seven Israeli deaths and twenty-seven wounded. There had been no incursions by Israel into Egyptian territory, and Egypt had been condemned by the Armistice Commission twenty-six times. The Israeli riposte in Gaza left thirty-eight Egyptian and eight Israeli dead. Sharett complained that he had "authorized" a far smaller number of Egyptian casualties. Clearly, our technique of resistance could not have controlled results.

In later years Nasser was to claim, sometimes with the support of Western observers, that his humiliation in Gaza led him to seek arms from the Soviet Union. It is difficult either to confirm or to refute this theory. In any case, it was impossible to win Israeli public support for the idea that our people should be passively killed in order to prevent Egypt from falling into the Soviet orbit. It is more likely that Gaza was the excuse rather than the cause of the Egyptian approach to Moscow for aid.

The Egyptian regime was now mounting an intensive campaign for the removal of British troops from the Suez Canal area. Iraq, then under a monarchical regime, strove together with Jordan and Lebanon to obtain American military aid. The Arab League adopted resolutions against negotiations between Israel and Jordan, against the Johnston-Eisenhower water plan, against any weakening of the Arab economic boycott of Israel, against the payment of compensation to the victims of Nazism in Austria, and against tendencies then apparent in New Delhi and Rangoon for establishing diplomatic relations with Israel. In the light of the fighting in Indochina and another failure to reach an East-West settlement at the Berlin Conference, the Western powers reinforced their pursuit of Arab favor, despite the instability of that bloc. On February 24, 1954, in a single day President Mohammed Naguib of Egypt and President Adib Shishakli of Syria were overthrown.

In Washington I made countless representations against the American intention to provide arms to Iraq. In the light of the impending British withdrawal from Egypt I went to the United Nations Security Council to seek a verdict against Egypt's continued violation of Israel's navigation rights of the Suez Canal. A majority was achieved in our favor, but the New Zealand resolution was vetoed by the Soviet Union. At home the triangle Sharett–Ben Gurion–Lavon was caught up in an alarming circle of animosities. A memorandum that reached me from Defense Minister Lavon was nothing short of apocalyptic in describing the effects on Israel's very existence of what he described as a massive concentration of hostile strength in Iraq and other Arab states.

The only relieving feature was a perceptible recovery in our economic situation. There was a rise in our foreign currency reserves to what was then the astronomic figure of $395 million with exports reaching $88 million as compared with $44 million the previous year. There was an increase both in industrial and agricultural production and a total revenue in foreign currency of $398 million of which at least 40 percent came from the United States government or American Jewry. At the end of May, five settlements were established in the Lachish area in fulfillment of an audacious plan for integrative rural settlement. The Yarkon–Negev pipeline was completed along a length of 106 kilometers. Immigration was still slender, but it rose from 10,000 to 17,000.

Nevertheless, our long-term security was visibly being eroded, and the focal point of action lay in the United States. Dulles and his associates made a determined effort to bring Arab countries into a Middle East defense organization. This was a totally unrealistic project in the light of the strong anti-Western current flowing in Egypt. The State Department preferred to believe that its troubles in the Arab world arose not from an endemic anti-Westernism in Arab capitals or a new tendency for nonidentification with either of the powers, but from what Dulles had called in his speech on June 1, 1953, "the need to allay Arab discontent arising from the establishment of the State of Israel."

Israel's decision to move the Foreign Ministry from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem caused further tension in Washington; and on April 4, 1954, Assistant Secretary of State Byroade went back to his campaign for the de-Judaization of Israel. He made a speech in which he said: "To the Israelis I say, look upon yourselves as a Middle Eastern state rather than a headquarters of world-wide groupings. Drop your attitude of conqueror and the conviction that force is the only policy that your neighbors will understand. To the Arabs I say, accept Israel. Accept at least a less dangerous modus vivendi with your neighbor." On May 1, addressing the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism, Byroade said that unlimited Jewish immigration was a matter of grave concern. On May 5 I made an official protest against this frivolous oratory which caused a partial retraction from the State Department. When I told Byroade that the UN had asked us to establish "a Jewish state," not "another Middle Eastern state," he could hardly believe his ears.

Although the restoration of a current installment of American aid had been agreed upon during Byroade's hasty visit to me in New York late in 1953, American-Israeli relations were awkward. Not for the first or last time I found a better response in American public opinion than in the State Department. Most newspapers declared that such events as the Kibya raid stemmed from the "unwillingness of the Arab states to recognize Israel."

On July 6, Eric Johnston informed President Eisenhower that Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel had accepted the principle of international sharing of the contested waters of the Jordan River and were all prepared to cooperate. Soon, however, it became apparent that the agreement of Arab specialists would not be ratified by their governments, even though Jordan and Syria received an excessively generous share of the Jordan waters.

All this time I was pursuing our economic negotiations intensely, both for their own sake and because this was in effect the only ray of light in the dark picture of American-Israeli tension. I also regarded the Johnston plan as a positive development. At the beginning of May 1954 President Eisenhower had asked the Congress to approve $160 million for that plan, and an additional project of irrigation in Sinai for the settlement of refugees. This generous initiative, however, was effectively stifled by Arab resistance.

I also moved to strengthen the instruments that could be put to the service of U.S.-Israeli relations. In January 1954 I had been able to initiate the establishment of an American-Israeli Society, which was joined by an impressive list of senators and governors of major states. It was by now becoming increasingly laborious for me to go from one Jewish organization to another in order to explain our policy. I therefore worked hard with Nahum Goldmann for the establishment in April 1954 of a permanent framework for cooperation among Jewish organizations on Israeli issues. This was the origin of the Presidents' Club. I was not yet able to persuade the influential American Jewish Committee, headed by Jacob Blaustein, to join, but that organization gave stalwart independent and effective service to the alleviation of difficulties between Washington and Jerusalem.

There still seemed to be no end to our troubles in 1954. While there was a temporary respite in border tensions from Jordan, Egypt increased its pressure. In September, Egyptian forces blew up the waterpipe at Niram in the south, and encouraged the infiltration of terrorists into villages of the northern Negev. In September the Israeli flagship *Bat Galim* attempted to pass peacefully through the Suez Canal to test our right of free passage. It was stopped by the Egyptians. While the Western powers supported our protest in the Security Council, it was obvious that they did not intend to make any effort to uphold Israel's rights.

On September 18 the Anglo-Egyptian agreement for the evacuation of the Suez Canal area was signed. I was called by Dulles to the State Department to receive what purported to be a soothing message stating that the exit of British troops would "decrease tension in the area" and that Israel "need not be concerned" at the supply of arms to Arab states. Meanwhile the *Bat Galim* discussion droned on endlessly in the Security Council. It had a dramatic end. The Egyptian representative, Mahmoud Azni, whom I had personal reason to recognize as the most moderate of Egyptian representatives, took the floor in the Security Council to answer my argument on Israel's right of free passage. In the heat of his rhetoric, he suddenly slumped in his chair, overcome by a massive heart attack. Incredibly, there was not then a doctor in the UN building, so I quickly ordered Moshe Tov, who had received full medical training without ever practicing his craft, to make an attempt at resuscitation, unfortunately in vain.

The ghastly year 1954 ended on a macabre note. On December 11 a military tribunal in Cairo began the trial of eleven Jews accused of espionage and sabotage in Cairo. It emerged that a reckless instruction had activated an espionage group which had laid explosive charges in public buildings in Cairo in the fatuous hope that the American and British governments, whose property was blown up, would attribute all this to Egyptian instigation and moderate their friendly relations with Cairo. The shadow of this "affair" was to convulse the Israeli political scene for many years to come. (Two of the accused, Dr. Marzuk and Shmuel Azar, were executed by hanging in the Cairo prison on January 31. The question whether Defense Minister Lavon was responsible for this instruction or whether he had been "framed" by his subordinates continued to agitate Israeli politics for many years.)

In face of all these dangers, we had not managed to secure action by the United States in balancing the new arms strength of the Arab countries. The new year opened in an atmosphere of emergency. Lavon's contentiousness, the suspicion about his part in the "affair," as well as concern about some of his proposals for savage security actions, led the Labor Party to advocate the return of Ben Gurion to the Defense Ministry. This was accepted both by Sharett and Ben Gurion, who returned as Defense Minister under Sharett's uneasy premiership.

It was obvious that 1955 would witness a decision for peace or war. While American officials led by Dulles continually gave me friendly assurances and reiterated their commitment to Israel's independence and economic progress, I could not take consolation from their statements as long as the central issue was unresolved: this issue was the change in the balance of armed strength and the reluctance of the United States to correct it.

The Egyptian government left us in no doubt that the main target of its new militance was Israel. On January 9 a leading member of that government, Major Salah Saleh, declared, "Egypt will strive to erase the shame of the Palestine War even if Israel should fulfill all UN resolutions. It will not sign a peace with her. Even if Israel should consist only of Tel Aviv, we should never put up with that."

It was clear that our foes were preparing for the kill. Two months later Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia announced that their armed forces would be placed under a unified command. The first conference of the nonaligned nations at Bandung adopted resolutions hostile to Israel in her absence. Not even the visit of Burmese Prime Minister U Nu to Israel in May could conceal the fact that the Arab and Soviet offensive was gaining momentum. The shooting down of an El Al plane over Bulgaria with heavy loss of life in July made the whole country feel like Job, too stunned to predict whence the next disaster would come.

I remember that I was in a Washington synagogue on the Jewish New Year when I heard the first definitive reports about the decision of the Soviet Union to make massive arms supplies available to Egypt through Czechoslovakia. After preparatory and noncommittal soundings in the State Department, I made a public request for American arms on October 11, 1955. In August, after many conversations with me, Dulles had attempted to give a stabilizing picture of American policy. I pointed out that the only effective way of counteracting Soviet support of Egypt was for the United States to grant a guarantee undertaking to Israel. Dulles accepted this principle, but reduced it to frustration by stating that the United States could not "guarantee temporary armistice lines"; it could only guarantee permanent agreed peace boundaries. I pointed out in public that the entire principle of a defense agreement with the United States was reduced to derision when it was made dependent on impossible conditions. All the Arabs now had to do to prevent an American guarantee to Israel was to refuse to reach "agreement" on a permanent boundary. I called this "a built-in deadlock." Moreover, Dulles' speech in August hinted broadly at the possibility that Israel might make a concession to Egypt and Jordan in a part of the Negev. Later he and his associate, Francis B. Russell, began to explore with us the possibility of creating triangles in the Negev which would enable Egyptian and Jordanian territory to meet at a certain point from east to west, while Israeli territory would pass the same point in "kissing triangles" from north to south so as to retain our access between Arab parts of the Negev.

If American policy was ominous, that of Britain was even more so. In November, Anthony Eden declared in the Guildhall that there should be a "compromise" between Israel's existing armistice boundaries and the even more meager lines proposed by the UN in 1947. Meanwhile the Baghdad Pact was becoming a reality, and on November 22 the first formal meeting of its signatories took place. Two weeks later, Arab strength in the United Nations was increased by the ad-mission of Libya and Jordan. In December the United States and Britain rounded off another somber year for Israel by promising to give Egypt assistance in financing the High Dam at Aswan.

The State Department thesis during our many stormy discussions was that the Soviet arms transaction was "more promise than fulfillment," and that if war broke out in the Middle East, Israel would win a crushing victory. There was a total refusal to believe that there was any limit to Israel's nervous strength and that in the absence of any military aid or political commitment, desperation would come to inspire our policy. In these conditions I had a double task. The central aim was to break the resistance of the Administration to the idea of giving Israel minimal support. If this could not be achieved, the secondary duty was to create in the United States and in the United Nations an atmosphere in which Israel's action would be comprehensible if we broke forcibly out of siege.

Amid these tempests in Washington and at the UN, my daughter Gila hardly had time to be born. She arrived a little impatiently two weeks ahead of schedule while I was addressing a United Jewish Appeal meeting in New York. I told my audience that no orator ever found a better reason for cutting himself short. She was born during a Washington snowstorm in the George Washington Hospital on December 13, 1954, and I lived most of 1955 with the accompaniment of her stentorian vocal comment. The consolation of her presence was too deep for words.

Our embassy residence had now moved to Juniper Street, to a house donated by Joseph and Ruth Cherner, who were loyal supporters of Israel. It was a rambling four-story structure farther from the center of town than an embassy should be. Suzy gave it an Israeli touch, full of white colors and light, and we had no difficulty in making it a focal point for the convergence of those who fashioned United States policy and opinion. I believed that while American policy could for a time separate itself from American public opinion, it was inevitable that opinion would eventually catch up with policy. I remember 1955 as a year crowded with meetings in Dulles' office, encounters with his senior officials, a vast number of contacts with the economic officers including Harold Stassen, who presided over the Mutual Security Administration. There were constant visits to the Senate and House of Representatives to brief a Congress that was destined to play a leading role in our affairs. There were meetings of Jewish fund-raising organizations with an occasional parenthesis at an academic forum, such as the Yeshiva University, to which I brought my detailed refutation of "Toynbee's Heresy" in an address in April. (Professor Arnold Toynbee had built a formidable case against Israel on pseudoacademic grounds). Security Council and General Assembly sessions were interspersed with long introspective encounters with Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld. I went back and forth in airplanes between Washington and New York, had lengthy exchanges of cables with our tormented government at home, and made occasional flights back to Israel through laborious staging points at Gander in Newfoundland and Shannon in Ireland.

Although 1955 was unrewarding on the major themes of arms and American support, it was decisive in establishing a broad base for Israel in American opinion. The Israeli embassy was far more central in the political and intellectual attention of the American people than the size of our country warranted. The Israeli reality was becoming more closely understood. At grass-roots level, Americans had some early difficulty in adapting themselves to the innovation. Their Biblical background helped them to understand our general vision but prepared them very little for our concrete problems. There were even some whose religious memories made it difficult for them to grasp the prosaic aspects of Israel's modernity. At our meeting with him in Paris in 1952, Eisenhower had told Sharett and me that as a boy in Abilene, Kansas, he had believed that Jews, or more accurately the Children of Israel, were, like angels, cherubim and seraphim, the creatures of legend. He was surprised and disconcerted to find later that they existed in real life, if not in Abilene, then at least in Texas, and most unmistakably in New York. In the early fifties Suzy found herself talking to the wife of a U.S. senator at a ladies' luncheon. When the conversation lagged, the lady asked courteously, "How is your king?" Suzy explained that we had no king but a President. The response was startled and incredulous. "What? A President? No king? Isn't that terrible? First they assassinate the king of Jordan. Then they depose the king of Egypt. And now there's a revolution in your country with the monarchy deposed and a republic declared. Shall we ever know peace?" Suzy explained carefully that Israel had had no king since its establishment. "Come now," was the reply, "you don't have to be diplomatic. We all know about poor King Solomon. And now you say he has been deposed."

As the months went on, our preponderant place in the headlines must have cured many Americans of any tendency not to know everything about Israel. I plowed the Washington soil deep and wide. The President himself had suffered a heart attack, and apart from a few formal receptions, was rarely available to ambassadors. On the other hand, Vice-President Richard M. Nixon, to the reluctant surprise of American Jews, showed a sympathetic interest. At his request I visited him in his Chevy Chase home to talk of our problems. He was, after all, a member of the National Security Council and of the Cabinet, and much less remote from the levers of power than American Vice-Presidents usually are. On a memorable occasion I played golf with him at the Woodmont Country Club, defeating him by one stroke on the last hole. I had made some effort to give him the victory, since, after all, we had $50 million tied up in Senate committees. But the sheer apathy and indifference of my swing at the ball ensured a three-hundred-yard drive and an unbeatable approach shot, with eventual victory by 89 to 90. A puzzled cable from our Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem asked pedantically how, if I had scored "only" 89 and he had scored 90, it could be reported that I and not he had won. I replied that golf conformed with the rabbinical idiom *"Kol hamosif goreia"*—"The more you add the less you accomplish."

In the Senate I followed a bipartisan course, achieving some intimacy with the two party leaders, Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas and William F. Knowland of California. They were both exponents and symbols of power, tall, bulky, authoritative and plainly accustomed to getting their own way. One evening Suzy and I entertained Lyndon Johnson at dinner in our Washington home. He seemed to know nothing about Israel in the beginning, but he probed away with all the tenacity of a ruthless dentist and with about the same amount of clinical amiability. A few days later I heard that he was in the hospital; but his condition was cardiac, not gastric, so our own kitchen could not be blamed.

Johnson was no respector of persons or offices. It was common to see his anteroom piled up with ambassadors, some of whom had been waiting for more than half an hour. For all his calculated show of virile toughness there was something about Israel that stirred his pious memories. When he spoke of our cause there would be a halt in the gruffness, and an untypical tenderness would come into his eyes and voice. There were others in the Senate, such as Stuart Symington, Hubert Humphrey, Irving Ives, Leverett Saltonstall, Sherman Cooper and Clifford Chase, whose support of Israel's interests could almost be taken for granted, as could that of the Majority Leader, Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania. Senators Jacob Javits and Abraham Ribicoff formed a natural bridge between American official life at its highest level and the Jewish community, of which they were loyal members. Javits, in particular, has been a central pillar of American-Israeli relations for over two decades.

There is something evocatively Roman about the United States Senate. There is a reverence for experience, a close ésprit de corps, and the air of leisured power conferred by six-year terms of office. A senator can be a "statesman" for four years and a "politician" for the rest. At the other side of Capitol Hill the arena was commanded by Speaker Sam Rayburn of Texas, bold and suave, with southern charm, an almost unbelievable figure from American folklore, who told me that he had never been outside the United States and did not feel that he had missed much. A few months later he went on a parliamentary mission to Paris and came back regretting that he had lost his major theme of conversation without "corresponding reward."

No historian, however charitable, has ever described Eisenhower's first Cabinet as a gallery of intellectual giants, but it did contain some men of marked individuality. For example, Charles Wilson, the automobile manufacturer, was the author of the unforgettable aphorism "What's good for General Motors is good for America." It was sometimes necessary for me to see him on our defense problems, and my successive military attachés, Chaim Herzog and Aharon Yariv, trained me to pay four or five visits to the Pentagon every year. Charles Wilson surprised me once by a pointed question: "Is Turkey one of the Ayrab countries with which you don't get on very well?"

While I naturally cultivated existing depositories of power with the relentless pragmatism of ambassadors, I tried also to have some thought for the future. Thus, one day in 1954 I sent my social secretary, Ethel Ginburg, a note suggesting that she put Senator John F. Kennedy from Massachusetts and his wife on the list of invitees to our small dinner parties. Back came the reply: "Mr. Ambassador, you can do as you like, but do you realize that you only have fourteen places and shouldn't you keep them for *important* senators like Wiley, Capehart or Symington?" I was relentless, and for once, got my way. But Kennedy indicated that he didn't like crowds, so he came alone with his wife, Jacqueline, and the four of us sat around our television set watching Joe McCarthy's final expiry. I found Kennedy generally talkative and eager to listen but very reluctant to discuss the McCarthyite phenomenon. Boston Irish politics were more complicated than I had been led to believe. In June 1955 I joined Kennedy in receiving honorary degrees by Boston University. He was walking on crutches and obviously in great pain. He seemed forlorn and I had the impression that history was passing him by. He implored me to carry out the duties of response on behalf of all the other honorands, since it was beyond his physical power to withstand the ordeal.

Among Cabinet officers, my most unusual interlocutor was Ezra Benson, a Mormon from Salt Lake City, who was Secretary of Agriculture. His Biblical fundamentalism was absolute. Thus, when I came to ask for American surplus grain in view of a drought in Israel, he said that he found the drought hard to believe. Was it not written that Israel was "a land of milk and honey"? I explained that in Israel, as elsewhere, farmers knew only two conditions—too much rain or too little. I would, therefore, be seeing him every six months—either to request drought aid or to ask for flood aid.

I worked hard on the press represented in Washington by pundits who had an aura of infallible authority rather like the leading cardinals at the Vatican. One of these was Walter Lippmann, with whom it was necessary to deal on the same basis as the head of a major foreign power. The response to his invitations was mandatory, and for an ambassador to be able to invite him was a sign of relaxed prestige. I now instituted a tradition of monthly background talks in which I would say everything that was on my mind to leading press representatives in the certainty that nothing "off the record" would be divulged. I have retained some verbatim copies of those exchanges with Walter Lippmann, James Reston, the Alsops, Joseph Krock. Martin Agronsky, Marquis Childs and others. The level of discourse raises a twinge of nostalgia and envy, from this generation to that.

I would encounter Arab diplomats, mostly at cocktail parties, at which they had a habit of looking through me as nonexistent. At the United Nations, a new turn in the membership debate brought Ireland to my left and Italy to my right. I was no longer enclosed by Iraq and Lebanon as in the early days. There was a spontaneous originality in the character of the Lebanese delegate, Charles Malik, a devout Christian and an authentic scholar who, whatever his national pieties might require, seemed intellectually moved by Israel's rebirth. As he once wrote: "No civilization can be indifferent to the cradle in which it was born." His own son, Michael, was born almost simultaneously with my daughter, Gila, and we exchanged congratulations: "Dear Ambassador Eban, it was most kind of you to have sent us your personal congratulatory note, for which we sincerely thank you. We, too, wish you and Mrs. Eban the true and abiding happiness that can in truth come only from God."

Washington was beginning to awaken out of provincialism to a sense of its own centrality. America lived tensely with its own paradox. It had come into existence as an act of rebellion against the Old World, with a strong impulse for detachment. In its heart it wanted nothing more than, in Jefferson's words, "To be kindly separated by nature and a wide ocean from the exterminating havoc of one quarter of the globe"—yet here it was helplessly entangled in rivalries not only of the Old World but of the newly born nations. It was developing a sophisticated political tradition. But while its mind turned outward to the world, its heart was firmly enclosed within itself. The social mathematicians and technologists were hard at work teaching Americans that a nation must respond to its self-interest. But there was always a rhapsodic element in the American character, and it was on this part of American spiritual soil that Israel's cause could flourish.

I had come to America skeptical of its values and full of European prejudice. I had said to a Boston audience: "If your tea is always like what I drank here this morning, I'm not surprised that you threw it into the harbor." In short time I was won over to a love for the endless variety of America's scenes, and the vivid interchange of its moods. This was the greatest union of strength with freedom that had ever lived in the world of man. As the years of my service went by, I came to bear for America the kind of respect that survives occasional criticism and disappointment.

But if there was anything to admire in America in the mid-fifties, it surely lay outside its Middle Eastern policies. This was the only period in which America could be justly accused of having left Israel alone to the winds and storms. The feeling that a tragic fate was in store communicated itself to the best minds across the Continent. If Israel were to fail because it had no bargaining or nuisance value in the clash of Great Powers, would not something irrevocable happen to man's moral history?

The fear that Israel's security was being compromised to a horrifying degree was not merely a subjective "complex" of Israelis. One day in April 1955 our information officer in the consulate in New York, Reuven Dafni, called me to say that Einstein had written to express deep consternation at Israel's plight. He suggested that we meet to discuss how he might help. I made my way to Mercer Street, in Princeton, with Dafni. Einstein opened the door to us himself. He was dressed in a rumpled beige sweater and equally disheveled slacks. This time he was without tie as well as socks.

He came straight to the issue. He said that the radio and television networks were always asking him for interviews, which he always refused. He now thought that if he had some "publicity interest" he might as well use it. Did I think that the media would be interested to record a talk by him to the American people and the world? I exchanged glances with Dafni, as if to say that this was the newspaperman's dream. Einstein took out a pen, dipped it in an old-fashioned inkwell and began to scratch some sentences on a writing block. We soon decided that he needed more time and arranged for Dafni and me to come and help him with the formulation of the text another day. Einstein courteously asked if we would like some coffee. Assuming that he would get a housekeeper or maid to produce the beverage, I politely accepted. To my horror Einstein trotted into the kitchen from which we soon heard the clatter of cups and pots, with an occasional piece of crockery falling to earth, as if to honor the gravity theory of our host's great predecessor, Newton.

That night I spoke by telephone to Suzy, who was on a visit to her parents in Haifa, leaving the recently born Gila with me and my mother, who had agreed to fulfill her grandmotherly function in Washington. Suzy asked me if I had an interesting day at the office. I said that nothing particular had happened, and then added with calculated nonchalance, "Oh yes, I forgot. Einstein made coffee for me today." I was celebrating a splendid moment in my career of marital conversation.

Arrangements went forward in Dafni's energetic hands for Einstein's planned television address, which was to be nationwide. But when Dafni and I were to meet him we were told that the professor had been taken to the hospital with an affliction of the aorta. A few days later he died. Among his papers were found the hand-written pages that he had prepared for the opening of his address. It began: "I speak to you tonight as an American citizen and also as a Jew and as a human being who has always striven to consider matters objectively." His unspoken text went on:

> *What I am trying to do is simply to serve truth and justice with my modest strength.*
>
> *You may think that the conflict between Israel and Egypt is a small and unimportant problem. "We have more important concerns" you might say. That is not the case. When it comes to truth and justice there is no difference between small and great problems. Whosoever fails to take small matters seriously in a spirit of truth, cannot be trusted in greater affairs. . . .*

The extract breaks off after a few reflections on the Cold War. We shall never know how Einstein proposed to end his appeal on Israel's behalf.

At a crowded memorial to Einstein in Carnegie Hall on May 14, 1955, the seventh anniversary of Israel's independence, I said:

> *He saw the rebirth of Israel as one of the few political acts in his lifetime which was of an essentially moral quality . . . When he felt the cold wind of Israel's insecurity, he apprehended that something very precious was being endangered; and at that moment he fell into a deep, responsible and active preoccupation with Israel's future, which brought me to him in the final days of his life, in encounters which I shall everlastingly cherish, recalling the warm and proud Jewish solidarity which enriched his discourse and endowed it with undying grace.*

I made many new acquaintanceships at the San Francisco ceremonies honoring the tenth anniversary of the UN. One was British Foreign Secretary Harold Macmillan, who invited me for a drink—or more precisely, for a number of drinks on his part and one tepid whisky and soda on mine. He discoursed in a rich Edwardian Oxford accent as though he were doing an exaggerated imitation of himself. Everything about him was easy, languid, without tears. But when I left him I realized to my surprise that everything that he had said so lazily seemed to hang together in rigorous intellectual coherence.

More exacting was a luncheon party Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov of the Soviet Union gave in honor of our delegation. Before the convivial part of our meeting, I had a talk with him for an hour and a half. There was a legend that nobody had ever seen him smile, and I was curious to know if this was true. I left him a few hours later with the legend intact. He had given notice to me that he did not speak or understand English and that I should bring an interpreter. I decided that if I was to talk a language that he did not understand, it might just as well be Hebrew. Accompanied by our erudite legal counseler, Dr. Jacob Robinson, I arrived at Molotov's headquarters and began my Hebrew remarks. I had not gone very far when he interrupted me: "What exactly is the language you are talking? I've listened carefully and it sounds nothing like Yiddish. I know, because my wife speaks Yiddish."

After the necessary philological clarification we went on to our business. He was plain and blunt. His information was that the United States was going to get Israel to sign a defense treaty. This would be a tragic development; the central aim of Soviet policy was to avoid being encircled by American and other imperialist bases. The Soviet Union had helped Israel come into existence in the hope that it would never lend itself as a base for the hostile actions of one power against the other.

The idea that Eisenhower and Dulles were ardently pursuing Israel as a partner for their defense pacts was too painful an irony for me to sustain. I could see, however, that Soviet policy makers were in earnest. They cared little how Israel voted and not much about what Israel would do in the UN. They would maintain a correct, if not a cordial official relationship. They believed at least that Israel's statehood was immutable. They had a quarrel with her policies, not with her existence. The only serious thing they asked of us was that we should resist the blandishments of American policy makers, who were trying hard to conclude military alliance with us.

When we sat down to the table, Molotov and the other Soviet diplomats with him seemed to be concentrating their most suspicious gaze upon me, as if to probe whether I had been negotiating defense alliances with the United States between drinks and first course. It was decided that at the dinner there would only be toasts, no speeches and no political remarks. Molotov's toast was "to the government and people and delegation of Israel, health and prosperity—and please do *not* sign defense pacts with the United States."

In our conversation I had referred mainly to the nervousness created in Israel by the Soviet arms transactions in Egypt. His response was brisk: Soviet arms were being supplied to Egypt to help defend her against imperialist belligerent threats and not in order to enable Egypt to make war with Israel. I pointed out that I had no doubt that this was the motivation of the arms supply, but "might the recipient not have motives not shared by the donor?" Molotov replied that the question sounded logical but in fact it had a clear answer: the Soviet Union was supplying military and other aid to Egypt not for the purpose that Egypt should make war against Israel. It "followed" therefore that the arms would not be used for that purpose.

In a year in which there were few consolations, we had to draw some comfort from the fact that we had access to all the Great Powers and could hold discourse with them. France had spent two years almost totally concentrated on its predicaments in Tunisia and Morocco. This created both a sense of detachment and an atmosphere of sympathy. Twice French prime ministers had come to Washington and stayed at Blair House. Twice they had received me. By strange coincidence, they were both Jews; Pierre Mendès-France at the height of his prestige after the Indochina conference and the Tunisian settlements, and later René Mayer.

Since our ability to seize the ear of all governments was one of our few weapons, the idea arose toward the end of 1955 that we should make a dramatic attempt to project Israel's plight into the dialogue of the Great Powers that had begun at the Geneva summit meeting in July and would be resumed by the foreign ministers in October. If my memory serves me right, the idea was first projected by Gideon Rafael to Sharett and myself. Our Prime Minister accepted it, perhaps with too much haste. On the other hand, Sharett had very little to lose. While the United States and Britain should, in theory, have had an interest in strengthening his position, they had behaved as though it was their deliberate purpose to inflict political death on him by sheer frustration. They stubbornly ensured that he should have nothing to show for his patient reliance on diplomacy and international opinion. Sharett was too realistic to expect success from his visit to Geneva, but he believed in historic duty. Even if we did not achieve anything by talking to the Great Powers at Geneva, it was our duty to try. Thus, he and I met in Paris for conversations with John Foster Dulles, with the intention to continue at Geneva with Macmillan, Antoine Pinay and Molotov.

It was a strange gamble. The summit meeting had not been called with any particular reference to the Middle East. Sharett's idea, which I supported, was to make a frank and uninvited invasion; to seize the news media and world opinion by illustrating that talk of world security was futile if Israel's security were excluded.

In Paris, we began with a protocolar debate. Sharett was Prime Minister as well as Foreign Minister; Dulles was "only" Secretary of State. Dulles ought, therefore, to visit Sharett. On the other hand, Dulles suffered from sinus trouble and the "flu" and "would therefore appreciate it if . . ."

We duly met in the gloomy ambassador's residence at the Rue d'Iena and found Dulles genial in tone but unyielding in content. His refusal of arms was no longer stated as a theological principle. It was pragmatic and conditional. In his view, the balance had not changed in Israel's disfavor. If it were to change, the United States would, of course, think again. Moreover, the European powers, and not America, had been the traditional suppliers of arms to the Arab-Israeli area. The United States had entered the supply picture with Pakistan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, but these were on the outer circle of Middle Eastern tension. It was not advisable for America to get into the inner circle. I asked innocently why there was any greater moral imperative in supplying arms to an external than to an internal ring of countries if there was a danger of imbalance. No reply. Dulles chewed a pencil, wrote and doodled on a yellow pad, and to his credit, looked infinitely uncomfortable under the pathos of Sharett's exposition. I thought at one point that it might be advisable for Sharett to give some time for Dulles to respond to what he was saying. I passed a few tactful notes across the table with no effect. In the end Dulles, having listened with care, said, "We can't finish our conversation here. Let's continue it in Geneva."

He was already famous for his nomadic impulse. He founded the tradition according to which diplomatic eminence is measured by air mileage. We duly went to Paris where Israel's ambassadors to all the Great Powers were assembled, together with Eliahu Sasson, our Arab expert, with Reuven Shiloah and Gideon Rafael. While I cultivated Dulles and his entourage, Sharett's meeting with Macmillan, Pinay and Molotov were held with the accompaniment of Ambassadors

Elath, Yaacov Tsur and Yosef Avidar. Macmillan was bland, amiable and totally noncommittal. Molotov was unresponsive to the point of rudeness and with none of the conviviality that he had shown me in San Francisco. He obviously regarded Israel's intrusion in Geneva as irrelevant. The issue was not Israel and the Arab states, but America and Russia. The United States was trying to build a ring of bases around the Soviet Union, in the course of which it would make "so-called defense treaties" with Middle Eastern states. The central imperative of Soviet security was to frustrate this design. This meant that the Soviet Union had to have influence in Arab states which had hitherto been under "the monopolistic influence of Western powers." This was the reason for the supply of arms to Arab states. Since the arms were "not intended for use against Israel," they would not be used against Israel. From this he would not budge.

While Sharett was in Geneva, Ben Gurion was constructing a new Cabinet to be formed on the basis of the 1955 elections, in which Ben Gurion had again appeared at the head of the Labor Party list. It was while we were at Geneva that Sharett reverted from prime-ministerial to foreign-ministerial role, so that no further protocolar problems arose. Sharett was plainly agitated by a struggle within himself. He felt that it was going to be disastrous for him to be Foreign Minister under Ben Gurion, with whom his temperamental conflicts were becoming sharper. On the other hand, the Labor Party, without having given Sharett any conspicuous support as Prime Minister, was not willing to have him jettisoned.

His premiership, though marred by internecine conflicts, had introduced a sense of order and conciliation to the nation's life. Sharett's methodical approach had had a good effect on the tone and texture of the Administration. All in all, the Israeli people was growing accustomed to his tutelage.

It may not be ungenerous to think that this very fact contributed to Ben Gurion's hasty decision to curtail his retirement. On resigning his office, Ben Gurion had told me that "nobody was indispensable." But I had the impression that he would not be too disappointed if that generalization proved to have one particular exception.

While we drew no comfort from Molotov, Dulles or Macmillan, Sharett's talks with the French authorities were more fruitful. Indeed, it was in Paris during his meeting with Edgar Faure, the Prime Minister, that Israel received the first concrete promise for the supply of Mystère aircraft. We would now celebrate our transition from the propeller to the jet age, and eliminate the most serious imbalance in relation to the Arab states. But this opening had come in the framework of our direct relations with Paris. It does not refute the fact that Sharett's visit to the Geneva summit did nothing to lessen Israel's vulnerability.

Yet I do not think that the visit itself was a mistake. Israel must always exhaust every remedy and learn exactly what her position is. Whatever the prospect of failure, and irrespective of his own political fortune, it was Sharett's moral duty to do what he did. The best way to put this to the test is to imagine what would have happened if he had stayed at home. Would we not have heard resounding statements about "lost opportunities," and a failure to make the ultimate effort to awaken the powers to our growing fragility? After war erupted in 1956, how many historians would have received doctorates for analyzing how the 1956 war might have been averted by a special Israeli effort at the Geneva summit in 1955? The tragic contingency in Israeli history is always so probable that there is a strong case for exhausting every recourse or alleviation, sometimes beyond the rational point of hope.

From Geneva I went back to my post in Washington and reflected long and hard on the national situation. After consultation with my principal colleagues—Reuven Shiloah in Washington, Reggie Kidron and Gideon Rafael in New York—I sent a cable to Sharett in January 1956 with a conclusion that surprised him. I pointed out that in spite of constant and maximal efforts we had not elicited any substantive response by the United States to the new balance of power created by the Soviet-Egyptian alliance and the rearmament of Arab states by East and West alike. Although the United States basically wished us well and was not doing anything actively to prejudice our position on boundaries, Jerusalem or the refugees, its failure to support us on the balance of power would expose us to weakness when it came to defending our vital interests, either at the negotiating table or on the battlefield. American official rhetoric was giving currency to the idea that Israel was not the victim of Arab hostility, but the successful victor, endowed with spoils some of which it could part from without any loss of vital interest. If this process went on, we would find ourselves virtually defenseless against an increasingly arrogant and cohesive Arab power. I went on to say that unless the United States did something serious, both in the supplying of arms and in the increase of our political weight, we would have to ask ourselves if there was any way of avoiding a military clash. This would be forced on us by the intensity of frontier raids. But I asked Sharett seriously to consider his duty to prepare the nation for the inevitability of large-scale Israeli military response unless the powers moved out of their apathy.

Since I was expected always to reflect the diplomatic nonmilitary emphasis in Israeli thought, this cable aroused surprise in Jerusalem. Sharett was far from pleased. I was giving inadvertent reinforcement to currents of thought that were already awake in Israel, and of which I was not fully aware. It was not my intention to strengthen the activist element in Israeli policy making. But it was my intellectual conviction that we were being slowly strangled, that our strength and spirit were ebbing away and that there might soon be no alternative to armed resistance if Egyptian pressure increased. I knew that the equilibrium could be restored if the United States made available twenty-four jet planes and auxiliary weapons. This thought aroused my fury against an Administration which obtusely refused to achieve so much stability at so small a price. I was still convinced that Washington would finally take a hand on Israel's side in the arms balance, but the pace of its movement bore no relationship to the rhythm of Arab rearmament.

The paradox of Dulles' position was reinforced by the fact that he had no objection to other countries giving Israel arms. Actually, he would rather have liked this to happen. Thus, when it appeared that the only jet aircraft that France could make available would be those contracted for manufacture for the U.S. Air Force, I was authorized to tell Paris that if France wished to make these available to Israel instead of to the United States, America would see no objection. I duly conveyed this, as was my duty, to the French ambassador in Washington, Maurice Couve de Murville, who thanked me in a personal note, but added in conversation that if there were to be a Western policy for maintaining the balance of power, the United States could not put all the odium for arming Israel on its allies, while keeping its own hands formally clean.

In my cable to Jerusalem I had said that there was little chance of 1956 passing without war unless there were a substantive change in the American attitude toward Israel's defense needs. Ben Gurion, back at the helm, now found ways of expressing his agreement with this analysis. He still hoped, however, that the United States would move to a deeper understanding of our plight.

Secretary of State Dulles had told me that he and his advisers would not feel that the balance of power could be defined as having changed unless they heard that the first Russian MIG-15s had actually arrived in Egypt. In early December 1955, this intelligence was received. For the first time we heard of discussions between the White House, the State Department and the Pentagon in which Israel's military position was seriously appraised. Sharett had come to Washington for talks with the Administration and he was told that by December 12 he would receive a carefully formulated reply to our requests. From well-informed newspapermen, including James Reston, I heard that the reply would not be completely negative. It later appeared that the United States intended to offer Israel a "package deal" under which we would receive limited supplies of arms, including jet aircraft, from Britain, France and the United States, with America using its diplomatic good offices to put much of this traffic as possible on the shoulders of its allies. We would not have regarded this as a victory. On the other hand, it would have done something to relieve Israel's sense of isolation and to establish the principle of a balance of strength as an element of American and Western policy. Since Dulles and his associates had advised me specifically to get Sharett to wait in Washington for the answer, it is inconceivable that they could have planned a totally negative reply.

The inherent complexity of our situation came to expression in what happened next. On December 10 Syrian guns fired on Israeli fishing vessels on Lake Tiberias (Sea of Galilee) in an effort to deny us the use of the lake and of the ten-meter strip on the northeastern shore which the armistice agreement had put under Israeli control. We had worked hard for those ten meters, not for their own sake, but because they created a juridical situation in which no part of the shore of Lake Tiberias was contiguous to Syrian territory. Thus Syria could not justly claim to be a riparian state in relation to Lake Tiberias.

It was right for the Israeli government to react sensitively to an encroachment on its sovereignty over the only body of fresh water in our complete possession. I knew from my reading how Lloyd George had told Clemenceau at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 that without the northern water resources, "Palestine could be reduced to a parched wilderness by anybody to the north." We could hardly be less concerned ourselves than Lloyd George had been.

In all military reaction, there is some need for "proportion." The Syrians had not caused any Israeli casualties in their December 10 attack, but when Israeli forces crossed into Syria the next night, they left behind seventy-three dead Syrians, six Israeli dead and many others wounded or missing. It was a shocking spectacle of carnage with very little attempt to give world opinion any warning of its necessity or dimensions. This action at Kinneret naturally killed any chance of a favorable reply to our arms request from the United States, even if such a reply was in the offing.

The international community was in furor and Sharett was plunged into depression. Golda Meir, the Minister of Labor, reached New York that night for a speaking tour and confirmed that there had not been any consultation either with the Foreign Ministry or with other ministers. Ben Gurion had merely conducted a consultation with himself. Sharett thought that, at best, Ben Gurion's timing had shown indifference to his own diplomatic efforts, which, after all, had been ordered by the Cabinet. At worst Sharett seemed to believe that there was something subconsciously deliberate in an action which deprived him of a slender hope of a personal diplomatic triumph. Back in Israel he was to say with some hyperbole, "Not even the devil could have chosen a worse time or a worse context for such an action."

My own feeling is that whatever remnants existed of Sharett's ability to work with Ben Gurion went up in flames in Galilee that night. I, too, found it impossible to understand how Ben Gurion could reconcile two such lines of action. On the one hand he had asked Sharett to make a big effort to secure a breakthrough on our arms request. On the other hand, he had authorized a military operation of such strong repercussion as to make an affirmative answer inconceivable. I thought that an error of judgment had been made. I said so frankly in a long letter to Ben Gurion in January 1956 after we had gone through the routine of discussion and condemnation in the Security Council. I got an immediate reply through his secretary saying: "I fully understand your concern about the Kinneret operation. I must confess that I, too, began to have my doubts about the wisdom of it. But when I read the full text of your brilliant defense of our action in the Security Council, all my doubts were set at rest. You have convinced me that we were right, after all."

I regarded this somewhat mischievous reply as being as close to repentance as I was likely to secure from Ben Gurion. My discussion with Jerusalem was not a defense of diplomacy against military needs. There was a clash between two military needs—the need for retaliation and the long-term need for defensive arms. It seemed to me that the short-term objective had triumphed unduly over our long-term aims.

In the first months of 1956, the dispatch of arms to Arab states from all parts of the world went on without Israel having received any response to its arms requests. All I could do was stimulate the growth of public opinion in our favor. I went on the CBS program *Face the Nation* at the end of February and tried to put the matter as simply as I could to the American public:

"British tanks to Egypt; American tanks to Saudi Arabia; British planes and tanks to Iraq; British planes and tanks to Jordan; American arms to Iraq; Soviet bombers, fighters, tanks and submarines to Egypt; and no arms for Israel. Bombers to Egypt to terrorize our cities? Yes. Fighters to Israel to help ward off those perils? No."

By this time the pressure on Eisenhower and Dulles to do something effective about Israel's declining balance of power was coming loudly from the American public, and not only from the Israeli embassy. American Jewry was skilled in organizing mass assemblies on our behalf. In April, Israel's eighth birthday was celebrated with a mass meeting in Yankee Stadium in New York. My colleague on the rostrum was Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts. When I finished speaking he said, "That was the first time that Macaulay's English has been heard in Yankee Stadium." My recollection of that occasion becomes even more surrealistic when I remember that one of the other star attractions was Marilyn Monroe. John F. Kennedy, Marilyn Monroe and Abba Eban riding around Yankee Stadium in an open car receiving the plaudits of the masses is something to remember. Miss Monroe seemed to make a stronger physical impression on most of the audience than did Kennedy or I, but we could claim to have a somewhat broader conceptual range. The sporting occasion was a soccer match between Israel and the United States. The game is not highly regarded in America, so that our team had some chance of victory. I said at the beginning of my address that I was quite impartial. I didn't care who won, as long as it was Israel's soccer team. It was.

By now Dulles' resistance to our arms request was beginning slowly to erode. At a B'nai B'rith dinner in Washington he said cautiously that the United States had an obligation to prevent Israel suffering from "an imbalance" of arms. Later that month he confessed his dilemma to me with candor. He said that he was now convinced that the needs of equilibrium required Israel to receive some modern jet fighters and other arms. On the other hand, if the United States supplied them directly, it would be under irresistible pressure to open a supply relationship with Arab states. The question was whether Israel could get what she wanted from somewhere else.

I replied that what we needed were F-86 jet fighters, and these were, as far as I knew, manufactured only in the United States and Canada. On hearing the word "Canada," Dulles pricked up his ears and told me that Lester Pearson would be visiting him that very day, and that some American F-86s were manufactured on license in Canada but were nevertheless at the disposition of the United States. A few hours later I called the Canadian embassy, where Ambassador Arnold Heeney informed me that in a talk with Lester Pearson, Dulles had requested him to make twenty-four F-86 jet fighters available to Israel out of the American quota production line!

There now began an extraordinary period of equivocation in which the United States pressed Canada and France to do that which it wanted to avoid doing itself, namely to appear in the eyes of the Arab world as the architects of a modest Israeli armament. From my point of view, this was better than nothing at all, but I could well understand the resentment in Paris and Ottawa which bred a spontaneous resistance to Dulles' importunities. I also thought there was something rather childish in the exercise. It would not be beyond the wit or resource of the Arab governments to learn the active role of the United States in producing this equipment for Israel. In fact, as we expected, the Canadian government, when it decided to give its authorization in September, stipulated that the United States should let it be known publicly that this was being done with American approval.

By that time, however, the whole question of arming Israel had passed out of the orbit of the United States and into the realm of a special French connection. All that can be said for Dulles, therefore, is that he accepted the principle of the balance of arms after much belated obduracy, and that having accepted the doctrine, he tried, albeit clumsily and indirectly, to put it into practice.

Most of these discussions went on through the hot summer, during which I made a vain effort to take some leave. Suzy and I had been introduced by Dave Niles to the charm of Martha's Vineyard, where we used to find a tranquillity far from the tumult and noise of the mainland. Martha's Vineyard had kept its Colonial and whaling association more effectively than it could ever have done without the advantage of insularity. My own enjoyment of the beaches and golf courses was sporadic; I would constantly be called by telephone to Washington, whither I would fly in a somewhat dilapidated Dakota of Northeast Airlines, either through New York or directly. In fact, I was on and off the island airport so often that it might have been better not to have attempted a vacation at all.

The summer months were explosive with drama both in our domestic politics and in the regional context. With our civilians constantly harried by *fedayeen* attacks from Egyptian, Jordanian and Syrian territory, and with the government unable to show concrete results from its request for Western arms, the nation was plunged into an embattled mood. Ben Gurion encouraged his Defense Ministry aides to go full speed ahead with their efforts to get as much out of our French military connections as possible. In doing this he was clearly undermining the jurisdictional authority of Foreign Minister

Sharett. But there were other difficulties between the two men. In theory, they should have constituted a balanced harmony. Each possessed some virtues and had some faults that the other lacked: Ben Gurion was impulsive, imaginative, daring, dynamic; Sharett was prudent, rational, analytical, realistic. Had they been able to work in close harness, an ideal equilibrium might have been achieved. Unfortunately, the very contradictions that divided their characters also created an incompatibility of emotion. They had gone together through many of the most testing ordeals of Jewish history, each presumably adding emphasis to the particular contours of his own character. So, far from having grown together like partners in a marriage, they had become almost physically unable to bear the sight of each other. Ben Gurion thought that Sharett was verbose, pedantic, finicky and inclined to confuse the vital with the incidental, the primary with the secondary. Sharett, with all his admiration for Ben Gurion, considered him demagogic, tyrannical, opinionated, devious, and on some occasions, not quite rational. Israel's foreign and security policies faced heavy days. Without some personal harmony, the two of them would be unable to guide our course.

By this time Ben Gurion must also have known that he would have to make decisions in 1956 that Sharett would be certain to contest, if not obstruct. Each had his loyal adherents within the Labor Party, but this very fact created the danger that in the absence of a clear-cut adjudication between them, the party itself would become split into rival camps. In June 1956, after many relatively polite maneuvers, Ben Gurion had directly requested Sharett's resignation. Despite the opposition of 40 percent of the party's Central Committee—an unusual scale of revolt against Ben Gurion—Sharett made his resignation effective in June. He sent me a touching letter, full of gratitude for the support that I had been able to give him, but also charged with bitter reflections on the circumstances that had brought about his resignation.

This was to be Sharett's last appearance at the center of Israel's stage. Although he was not advanced in years by the standards of Israeli leadership, he never managed to overcome his rancor sufficiently to assume a place in the national leadership under Ben Gurion's authority. By the time Ben Gurion left the scene in 1963, Sharett had already been sidetracked into the motionless waters of the Zionist Organization, with Levi Eshkol filling Ben Gurion's place.

Sharett impressed his personality deeply on the first decades of our political struggle. He had the same zeal and single-mindedness as the rest of his colleagues in the Labor leadership and the Israeli government. But what separated him from them was the precision of his thinking, his reverence for correctness and symmetry of form, his deep roots in the Hebrew and Arabic cultural traditions, his disrespect for anything that was shoddy, careless, untidy, imprecise, or still worse, morally questionable. Not all his colleagues welcomed his habit of correcting their Hebrew or pointing out faults in their logic. He was a man of sharp colors and straight lines, and the very probity of his character and the constancy of his values made it difficult for him to accept the compromises that are needed for cooperative work in a national team. He seemed unable to give some of Ben Gurion's foibles the particular indulgence to which Ben Gurion was entitled by the compensating weight of his virtues. Sharett spent the next decade brooding unfruitfully on his fall with no serious effort at political recuperation. In one quality he surpassed all the leaders of Zionism and Israel—in his warm human spirit and his proud and unselfish cultivation of younger talents.

Ben Gurion was aware that with Sharett's departure he was losing specialized skills that might be hard to replace. He asked me to come home to Jerusalem for consultation and suggested that I leave my Washington embassy to become chief adviser on foreign affairs to himself. I would thus be a kind of watchdog over the new Foreign Minister, Golda Meir, with a direct line of command to Ben Gurion. It seemed clear to me—and even clearer to Golda Meir—that this was a sure prescription for antagonistic explosions in which Mrs. Meir and I and, perhaps, even Ben Gurion would be injured every day by flying splinters of jurisdictional discord. At lunch in her house, Mrs. Meir and I agreed that we could best cooperate across the ocean, with me pursuing my mission in Washington, which, in any case, had reached such a point of cruciality that it would have been irresponsible to abandon it. Whatever status and resonance I had been able to develop in Washington and throughout America in the past six years would now have to prove their value in great ordeals.

Sure enough, barely a few weeks had passed when we were confirmed in our impression that 1956 was going to be a pyrotechnic year. It began with an imaginative American initiative. One day I was called to Dulles' office in Washington to receive a message for Ben Gurion. Eisenhower and Dulles wanted to exhaust every possibility of a peace settlement. They would not recoil from the idea of a continuing armistice resting on a balance of arms, but this would involve permanent tension both regionally and in the global context. They therefore proposed to test the Arab and Israeli attitudes to a peace negotiation. Since Nasser claimed to be the leader of the Arab world, it was natural for him to be the testing ground. The proposal was that a close personal friend of the President, Robert Anderson, who had been Secretary of the Navy and was now in private business in New York and Texas, should go secretly to the Middle East, meet Nasser and Ben Gurion, and explore the idea of an encounter between them at an agreed place in or outside the area.

Ben Gurion reacted enthusiastically to this idea, and I was authorized to brief Anderson on our basic positions. He set out in strong hope and returned a few weeks later in despondency. It was clear that Ben Gurion had succeeded in conveying a strong and sincere impression of Israel's desire for peace, whereas Nasser, already inhibited by his closer relationship with the Soviet Union, found ways of evading any encounter with Ben Gurion. I even had the impression that he showed a marked reserve toward the United States. It may not be accidental that from that point onward, the Eisenhower Administration drew closer to Israel and even began to be less tight on the matter of the arms balance. I could detect a growing intimacy and confidence between Washington and Jerusalem. It is possible that Nasser's lack of cooperation with the Anderson mission played a part in the dramatic change of heart by the United States on the issue of the Aswan High Dam.

Throughout the summer months Egypt had been pursuing her negotiations with the World Bank for the financing of the Aswan High Dam. Late in 1955 the United States and Britain had favored this project, but as the months went on, they became increasingly disenchanted with Nasser. He seemed to be in collision with Western policy everywhere in the world. He had brought Soviet influence into the very heart of the Middle East. He was flirting intensely with Communist China. He was attempting to bring about the overthrow through violence and assassination of every Arab regime that refused to accept his authority. He plotted against President Camille Chamoun in Lebanon, against King Hussein in Jordan, against the monarchical regime in Iraq, against the conservative forces that controlled the Arabian peninsula, and against the Tunisian regime newly established under Habib Bourguiba. Not only did this involve him in the hostility of Arab regimes, it also won him the distrust of Britain and the United States, who had a stake in the stability of all Middle Eastern governments. When to this was added his blockade of the Suez Canal, his seizure of the *Bat Galim,* his refusal to help the United States implement the Johnston water plan, and the constant pressure of his armed raids on Israel's boundaries, it becomes clear why the Western powers, and especially Britain and France, should have dreamed nostalgically of "living without Nasser."

On instructions from Jerusalem we joined in helping to frustrate Egypt's ambitions for American aid in the Aswan Dam project. In different conditions I personally would have welcomed the preoccupation of Egypt with large-scale economic projects. It was clear, however, that Nasser regarded his new economic strength not as an aim in itself, but as the handmaiden of an aggressive military and diplomatic policy. If he could receive arms from the Soviet Union as well as vast financial aid from the West without any modification of his policies toward the West or Israel, he would become the arrogant lord of the Arab world. Nothing could be more disastrous for us than to let Nasser celebrate a victory of pride that he would certainly use for aggravated pressure upon us. So Israel's friends in the Congress joined their colleagues who, for other American reasons, opposed the idea of giving Nasser a windfall without any reciprocal gesture on his part.

The Egyptian ambassador in Washington, Ahmed Hussein, had apparently not been following these tendencies when he arrived blithely from Cairo to see Dulles in the expectation of receiving American confirmation of the Aswan Dam project. He crossed me in the lobby of Dulles' office as I went out and he went in.

To his consternation, Dulles brutally informed him of the American refusal to finance the Aswan Dam project. Without the American contribution, the World Bank under the direction of Eugene Black had no way of executing it. The British contribution also lapsed automatically. Eden was later to claim that Britain and France were drastically affected by an American action on which they had not been informed or consulted.

Nasser, in cold, fierce resentment, looked around for a sensitive Western nerve against which he could hit back. He found it on July 27, the anniversary of the revolution, when to hysterically cheering crowds in Alexandria he proclaimed that he had decided to take over the Suez Canal and make it a nationalized Egyptian property. The die was cast for war.

8

Explosion at Suez 1956-1957

FRANCE AND BRITAIN HAD COME TO REGARD THE SUEZ CANAL ALMOST AS A part of their metropolitan territory. They believed, with exaggeration, that it was their jugular vein. How could they maintain their strength or prosperity without it? In Egyptian hands it would be a weapon of extortion; it would also be beyond Egyptian capacity to operate it. The atavistic habit of regarding the Canal as an extension of their own national territory, as integral to them as Normandy, Kent and Sussex, was hard to break. In Britain, especially, it was recalled that in 1940 when the Nazi-Fascist axis threatened the Western Desert of Egypt as well as the British Isles, Churchill had allocated priority of weapons to the Western Desert at the expense of greater vulnerability for the British homeland. Eden in Britain and Premier Guy Mollet in France, enraged by Nasser's subversions in Jordan, Iraq, Algeria and elsewhere, found the insult of nationalization too great to bear. They decided to resist Nasser's provocation. Eden, thinking back to his golden years in the thirties, identified Nasser with Hitler, and himself with the forces of light and salvation that would break the tyrant's power before it was too late. He had been prevented by Chamberlain from playing this role in his youth. He was not going to let it desert him now that he had reached the peak. On July 29, he wrote to President Eisenhower:

> *My colleagues and I are convinced that we must be ready in the last resort to use force to bring Nasser to his senses. For our part we are prepared to do so. I have this morning instructed our Chiefs of Staff to prepare a military plan accordingly.*

Similar communications went from Guy Mollet to Eisenhower and Eden. It should have been clear everywhere that the two Western powers were bent on a forcible solution. Eisenhower's response was ambivalent. His main reaction was to send an experienced diplomat, Robert Murphy, to represent the United States in talks with the British and French in London. Eden was to write: ". . . we assumed that the American attitude was one of prudence rather than divergence." The French Foreign Minister, Christian Pineau, was quick to tell Murphy "that since the United States was responsible for the Aswan decision, it should not disinterest itself from the consequences."

My own reading of Eisenhower's character led me to believe that he would not support an Anglo-French military expedition. I said this to some British diplomats who wanted to believe in "English-speaking solidarity." On July 31 Eisenhower wrote to Eden expressing his "personal conviction as to the unwisdom of even contemplating the use of force at this moment. I realize that the messages from both you and Harold [Macmillan] stress that the decision was firm and irrevocable. I hope you will consent to reviewing this matter once more in its broadest aspects. I have asked Foster Dulles to leave this afternoon to meet with your people in London."

Dulles' tactic for the next crucial months was to satisfy his European allies by words—and to prolong negotiations so as to let the steam out of their bellicose instincts. He even gave Eden the impression that he might support a forceful solution. This, at any rate, is how Eden interpreted Dulles' phrase "A way has to be found to make Nasser disgorge what he is attempting to swallow." On this foundation Eden was later to build a whole edifice of conviction that Dulles had deceived him. Pineau, less passionate, has written: "Dulles' policy was always clear enough."

In the meantime the British determination for military action grew more fervid. It was nourished by an assumption, which proved to be illusory, that the Labour Party would give support. Had not Herbert Morrison said in the House of Commons: "If the United States will not stand with us we may have to stand without them"?

From my vantage point in Washington and the United Nations, it was obvious that although Israel was not in the center of the crisis, we would be affected by its course. The first consequence was irritating. It had been planned that on July 28 the United States and Canada would make a joint statement assuring us that we would receive two squadrons of F-86s in accordance with agreements between the two governments. Dulles, leaning back in his familiar leather armchair, biting the top of a pencil before scribbling with it on a yellow pad, never looking me straight in the face, twitching nervously at the corner of his mouth, told me that this would "of course" now have to be postponed. Relations between Egypt and the Western world were tense enough without adding a new explosive element.

I now heard from Jerusalem that French leaders were speaking openly to Israelis, especially in our Defense Ministry, about the inevitability of a military showdown. Moreover, Eden had committed himself to prevent a situation "which would leave the Canal in the unfettered control of a single power which could, as recent events have shown, exploit it purely for purposes of national policy." By early August a joint team of Anglo-French military planners went to work. Bourgès Maunoury, the French Defense Minister, and his *chef de cabinet*, Abel Thomas, were flying across the Channel several times a day. Britain would provide a supreme commander, General Sir Charles Keightley, with a French deputy, Vice-Admiral Barjot. Keightley was—irrelevantly—a cavalry officer, but would presumably leave his horses behind. Cyprus would be the place at which the Expeditionary Force would be put together.

At a UN Security Council meeting held at foreign-minister level in October, it became apparent that Britain and France were merely going through the motions of diplomatic remedy. They were convinced that nothing but force would induce Nasser to "disgorge" the Suez Canal. I held meetings with Dulles in New York at his United Nations headquarters, where I pointed to the anomaly of Israel's exclusion from the debate. If there was any real evidence that Egypt would use the Canal as an "instrument of unilateral national policy," it lay in the prolonged Egyptian blockade of Israeli shipping after the Security Council's resolution of 1951 had ruled the restrictions to be illegal. Dulles and British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd told me, as did Pineau later on, that it would be unwise to transform the conflict from a confrontation between Egypt and maritime powers into a new episode of Arab-Israeli conflict.

There was some point in this logic and I was content at that stage to submit a detailed memorandum to the Security Council on Egypt's abuse of its geographical position to block international waterways. This was useful evidence for the Western powers, who did not, however, want me to bring Israel's full case to the Security Council. In any event, I felt that our cause was not logically bound up with theirs. After all, the Canal had been closed to Israeli shipping and cargoes even while the alleged "international system" was in force. I had no great hopes that we would have use of the Suez Canal even if Britain and France managed to renew their possession of it. For me, the Egyptian blockade of the Canal was important, not for any intrinsic economic reason, but as a conspicuous symptom of the illicit belligerency which governed the Egyptian attitude toward Israel.

The Security Council was in session under the chairmanship of the French Foreign Minister, Christian Pineau, when General Yehoshafat Harkavi, the Israeli chief of military intelligence, arrived in New York. He went to talk with Pineau and General Maurice Challe at the French delegation headquarters. I myself conducted my business with Pineau on Security Council procedures by a separate channel. Israel had achieved a greater intimacy and confidence with France than with any other country since our establishment. A closed and secret meeting of the Knesset in October had heard Ben Gurion lyrically describe the arrival of the first French arms. The poet Nathan Alterman celebrated this event in rhapsodic verse.

On October 16 I flew to Tel Aviv, where Ben Gurion had called for a meeting of Israeli ambassadors in the major capitals. My plane stopped over in London. As I went into the transit section at the airport I observed a busy scene a few yards away. Prime Minister Anthony Eden was arriving at the airport to join Selwyn Lloyd, who had flown in from the United Nations in New York. Both of them went on board a plane, which, I learned later, was bound for Paris. This was to be the encounter during which the British and French government would make their decision for action against Nasser.

In Jerusalem I joined the ambassadors' conference, at which Ben Gurion put the accent on the Jordan front, where we were threatened by daily incursions. There was also a prospect of Iraqi troops moving in to reinforce the Jordanian battle order. Some of us suspected that Ben Gurion's objective was diversionary and that his main concern was with Nasser. Before leaving Israel on October 20, I had a private talk with Ben Gurion. He told me that our security situation was becoming increasingly grave. He described a visit to Paris of an Israeli mission headed by Golda Meir on September 28. He himself had now been asked to meet Premier Mollet in France later that day. He was skeptical about any outcome of the meeting; he doubted that France would join Israel in operational security measures. If, to his surprise, agreements were reached, he said, "you will be feeling certain consequences in Washington."

I returned to America, where, during the next week, my preoccupation was not with Egypt at all. Raids from the Jordan frontier were increasing, and there were reports about a decision of the Iraqi government to station large contingents of troops in Jordan. It had always been Israel's position that the armistice agreement depended on a military balance and that the signatory governments had an obligation not to allow the troops of foreign powers on their soil. Israel's repeated warnings that she would not be bound by the armistice agreement if a part of Jordanian territory was occupied by other Arab armies had paradoxically helped to preserve Jordan's independence over the years: without the interposition of Israel, Egypt's demographic strength and regional leadership would have led to the inundation of Jordan by Egyptian forces long before.

A meeting of the Security Council on this matter was held in October. I had acrimonious exchanges with the British delegate, who hinted that if there was an Israeli move, the British guarantee of Jordan's integrity would come into play. Yet while the conflict on the open level of diplomacy was between Israel and Jordan, a different alignment was at work beneath the surface. At a meeting in Sèvres between Ben Gurion, Selwyn Lloyd and Mollet, Britain was brought into a plan for a concerted "stop Nasser" operation. While I had been in touch with the movement of French-Israeli relations, I had not been informed at all of this British development.

Indeed, I was puzzled by directives from Jerusalem in late October urging me to sharpen the conflict with Jordan and, indirectly, with Britain about the position on our eastern frontier. I innocently assumed at first that Ben Gurion had failed to win support from France against Egypt and was working off steam against Jordan. Moshe Dayan has since revealed that the decision to go ahead with a joint Anglo-French-Israeli operation in Sinai was made in Sèvres on October 23. He had exultantly cabled from Paris ordering the General Staff to get ready and to undertake camouflage maneuvers for diverting attention to Jordan.

On October 27 I was playing golf at the Woodmont Country Club near Washington with Martin Agronsky, a leading television commentator, and Sidney Yates, a congressman from Illinois. They had often been my partners. Martin's game was erratic and volatile, thus comforting me in my own irregularities, while Sidney reduced us both to despair by his professional talent. I had taken up the game in the early fifties when I received medical advice to find at least minimal opportunities for exercise. The most specific suggestion to translate this advice into golf came to me from the Labor leader, George Meany, who, in his mid-eighties, is still a zealot of the game.

Early in the game a messenger came to me, asking me to call Secretary Dulles at the State Department immediately. Dulles' need to be in constant touch with President Eisenhower had made him something of an authority on the location of Washington's golf courses. Dulles spoke to me excitedly about Israeli troop concentrations. I said that I could not effectively deal with this matter from a golf-course telephone and would come over at once. I got in touch with my deputy, Reuven Shiloah, asking him to meet me in the Department of State. When we arrived, Dulles, surrounded by an anxious retinue of advisers, was looking hard at a map in the middle of the room. But I noticed that the map portrayed the Israeli-Jordan armistice boundary, and nowhere touched Sinai. The Secretary's mood was somber. From U.S. ambassadors in the Middle East, including Edward B. Lawson in Israel, reports had come of great Israeli troop concentrations amounting to virtual mobilization. Dulles replied with frank skepticism to my argument that Israel was, after all, faced by grave danger. "What have you to worry about?" he said. "Egypt is living in constant fear of a British and French attack. Jordan is weak. It is now clear that the Iraqis are not going to enter Jordan. On the other hand, if it is Israel that is planning to attack, it is perhaps because your government regards the present time as suitable." I promised to convey what he had said, but added an expression of regret that "the United States government has not shown a greater degree of faith in Israel's basic intentions."

On the morning of October 29 the atmosphere of emergency was aggravated. The U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv reiterated its advice to American citizens to leave the country. I felt that it was almost impossible to react to American pressures without myself knowing more of what was going on. I sent a cable to Ben Gurion and Golda Meir explaining that we were living in an emergency atmosphere and that Arab responsibility for the situation should be emphasized more. It was not clear to public opinion that Israel had been the victim, not the author, of the situation which had erupted in war.

In reply I received a laconic message urging me to describe the situation as arising from "security measures" and to stress that there was no connection between what we were doing and the conflict of other powers with Egypt. Shiloah and I were in the office of William Rountree, Assistant Secretary of State for Middle Eastern Affairs, emphasizing our defensive posture, when Donald Bergus, head of the Palestine desk, came in with a note that he passed to Rountree, who read it out loud. It spoke of a massive eruption of Israeli forces across the Egyptian frontier, and a subsequent forking movement and parachute drop deep into Sinai. Rountree said with sarcasm, "I'm certain, Mr. Ambassador, that you will wish to get back to your embassy to find out exactly what is happening in your country."

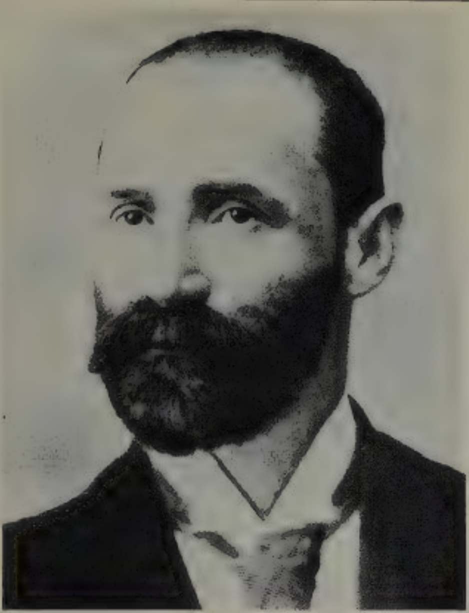
Our contact with the State Department was now virtually sundered. On October 30, when my counselor, Yochanan Meroz, made some representation to Bergus, he received the cold reply that "the only matter to be discussed between the State Department and the embassy of Israel is the evacuation of American citizens from Israel."

The news of the Israeli operation had reached President Eisenhower when he was en route by plane to Florida in the course of his electoral campaign. At the Miami airport he promised to put the full weight of the United States to work in an effort to prevent a clash between Israel and the Arab states. He promised that "the United States would not do anything simply to win cheers." On hearing how deep the penetration of Sinai had been, he interrupted his tour and returned to Washington. That afternoon Dulles called the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for emergency consultation. In the evening he summoned the British and French ambassadors and requested their governments to activate the Tripartite Declaration of 1950. I understood that the replies of Paris and London were evasive. That night Eisenhower convened a meeting with Dulles; the Chief of Staff, Admiral William Radford; the Secretary of Defense, Charles Wilson; and Allen Dulles, head of the CIA; together with other high officials of the State Department, the White House and the Pentagon.

The President expressed "disappointment" with the Israeli government. He said that until that day he had been sincerely convinced that Prime Minister Ben Gurion's opposition to a deliberate war was genuine. Now his faith was shattered. Dulles referred to his own statement of April 9 about the support of the United States "for any country that was attacked." That declaration had been drafted in the National Security Council as a promise of protection for Israel in an effort to reassure us in the face of Arab rearmament. It was now decided to use the declaration against Israel.

Official Washington was in an angry mood. It had no doubt that we had deliberately chosen the election week as the occasion for our operation. This suspicion increased the President's rage. He felt that his personal prestige was at stake. He also told all who spoke to him that day that Israel was "doing a great service to the Soviet Union by diverting world opinion from resistance to the Soviet repression in Poland and Hungary." That evening a statement was published in the White House:

> *The President recalled that the United States under this and prior Administrations had pledged itself to assist the victim of any aggression in the Middle East. We shall honor our pledge.*

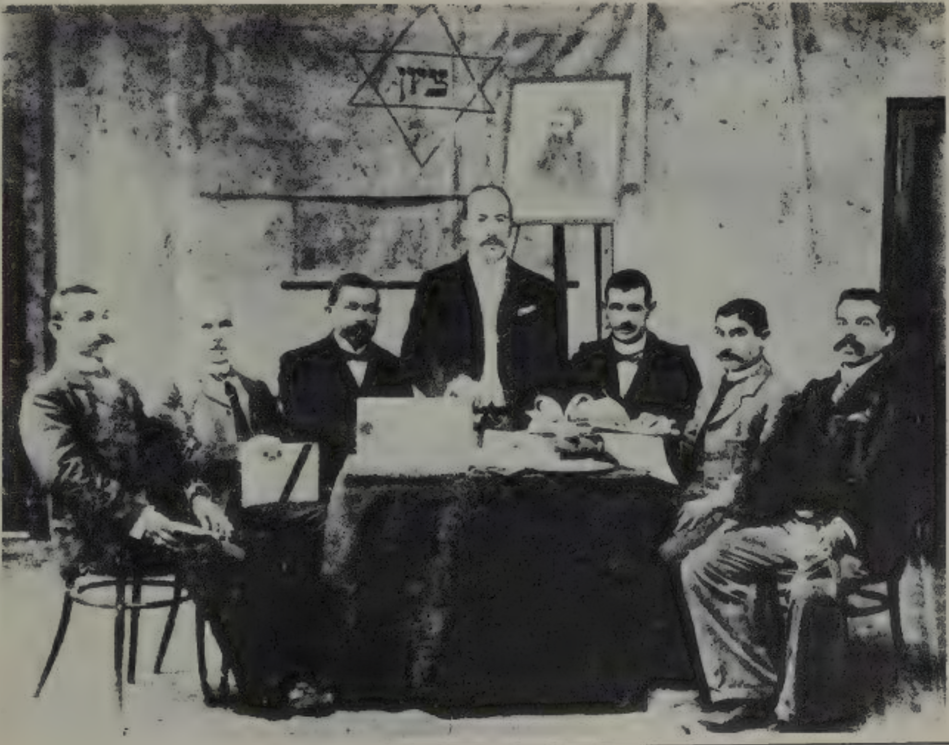


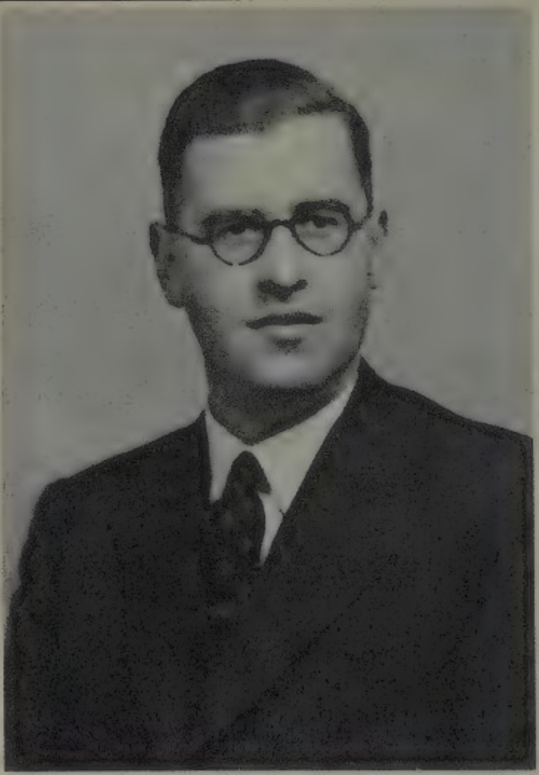
My grandfather Eliahu Sacks

ALEXANDER ARCHER

Alida Eban

My father, A. M. Solomon (third from left) *, at Zionist meeting in Capetown, 1902.*





Cambridge Don, 1938

With Suzy's parents and Eli and Gila.

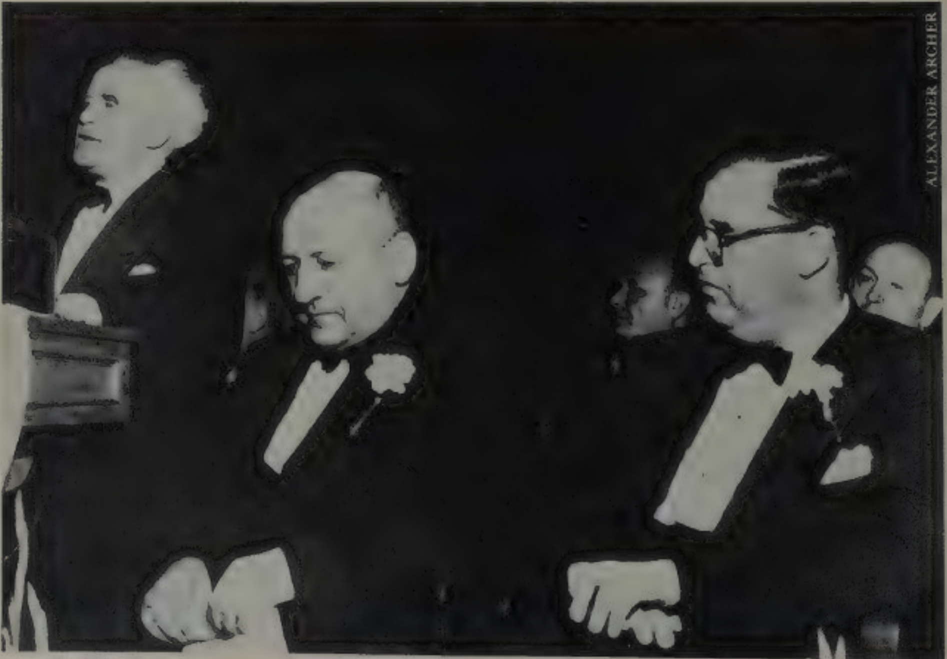
A meeting in Cairo, 1943, with Moshe Sharett and Rabbi Israel Brodie (later Chief Rabbi of Britain). In foreground: *Reuven Shiloah.*

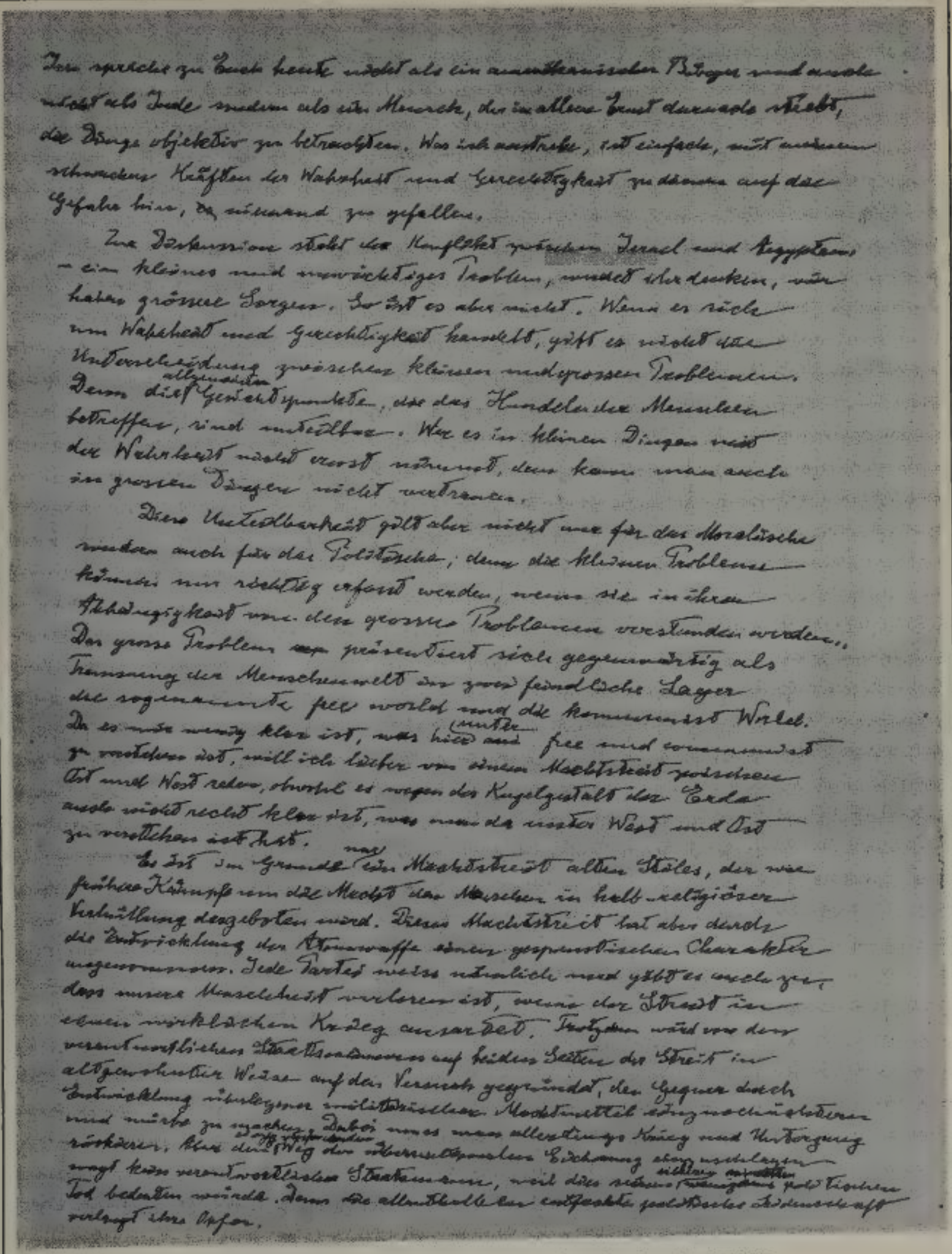
Escorting Dr. and Mrs. Chaim Weizmann at UN committee hearings, Jerusalem, July 1947.

WORLD WIDE PHOTO

Meeting at White House, January 8, 1953, with President Truman and Mrs. Vera Weizmann.

The first Israel Bonds are sold—Madison Square Garden 1954. David Ben Gurion and Finance Minister Eliezer Kaplan.


ALEXANDER ARCHER



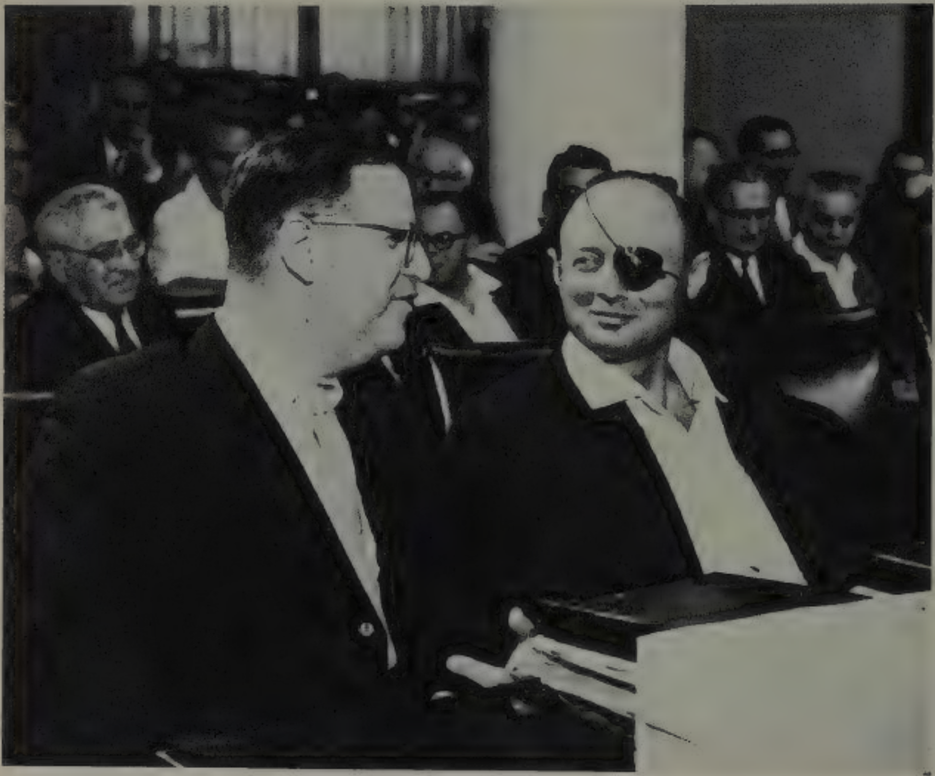
Ich spreche zu Euch heute nicht als ein amerikanischer Bürger und auch nicht als Jude, sondern als ein Mensch, der in allem Ernst danach strebt, die Dinge objektiv zu betrachten. Was ich anstrebe, ist einfach, mit meinen schwachen Kräften der Wahrheit und Gerechtigkeit zu dienen auf die Gefahr hin, niemand zu gefallen.

Zur Diskussion steht der Konflikt zwischen Israel und Aegypten – ein kleines und unwichtiges Problem, mögt ihr denken, wir haben grössere Sorgen. So ist es aber nicht. Wenn es sich um Wahrheit und Gerechtigkeit handelt, gibt es nicht die Unterscheidung zwischen kleinen und grossen Problemen. Denn die allgemeinsten Gesichtspunkte, die das Handeln der Menschen betreffen, sind unteilbar. Wer es in kleinen Dingen mit der Wahrheit nicht ernst nimmt, dem kann man auch im grossen Dingen nicht vertrauen.

Diese Unteilbarkeit gilt aber nicht nur für das Moralische sondern auch für das Politische; denn die kleinen Probleme können nur richtig erfasst werden, wenn sie in ihrer Abhängigkeit von den grossen Problemen verstanden werden. Das grosse Problem präsentiert sich gegenwärtig als Trennung der Menschenwelt in zwei feindliche Lager, die sogenannte free world und die kommunistische Welt. Da es mir wenig klar ist, was hier unter free und communist zu verstehen ist, will ich lieber von einem Machtstreit zwischen Ost und West reden, obwohl es wegen der Kugelgestalt der Erde auch nicht recht klar ist, was man da unter West und Ost zu verstehen hat.

Es ist im Grunde nur ein Machtstreit alten Stiles, der wie frühere Kämpfe um die Macht den Menschen in halb-religiöser Verhüllung dargeboten wird. Dieser Machtstreit hat aber durch die Entwicklung der Atomwaffe einen gespenstischen Charakter angenommen. Jede Partei weiss natürlich und gibt es auch zu, dass unsere Menschheit verloren ist, wenn der Streit in einen wirklichen Krieg ausartet. Trotzdem wird von den verantwortlichen Staatsmännern auf beiden Seiten der Streit in altgewohnter Weise auf den Versuch gegründet, den Gegner durch Entwicklung überlegener militärischer Machtmittel einzuschüchtern und mürbe zu machen. Dabei muss man allerdings Krieg und Untergang riskieren. Aber den Weg der übernationalen Sicherung einzuschlagen wagt kein verantwortlicher Staatsmann, weil dies sicheren politischen Tod bedeuten würde. Denn die allenthalben entfachte politische Leidenschaft verlangt ihre Opfer.

The undelivered speech. Einstein's last draft, April 1955.



Two new members of the Knesset, 1960.

Wooing the electorate in Haifa Bay, 1965.

With Israeli ambassadors to Eastern Europe outside the gas chamber, Auschwitz, May 1966.

That night I called on the French ambassador, Hervé Alphand. He himself did not yet know what was later to develop in the Security Council or that France was involved at least as much as Israel in the current operation.

The first reactions of American opinion were hostile. Typical was the Washington *Post* editorial:

> *No amount of provocation can justify Israeli aggression against Egypt. In either case, it involves the most frightful risk of larger war, and it may well lose for Israel the sympathy of the free world.*

A wave of high tension ran through the city. Senators, congressmen and newspapermen friendly to Israel expressed the apprehension that the conflict would spread. They strongly urged us to do everything possible to bring military operations to an end.

Among American Jews the confusion was great. The Zionist leader, Abba Hillel Silver, telephoned me from Cleveland and promised to give his full assistance. He thought there had been "an error in judgment even more serious than in the case of the Kinneret operation." Other Jewish leaders told me that no ground had been prepared and that a military operation a week before the presidential election increased their embarrassment and threatened their position. But I also received expressions of pride about the efficiency with which the Israeli forces were carrying out their tasks. The Zionist leaders, meeting on Tuesday, October 30, in New York, recommended full solidarity with Israel. They also wanted to criticize President Eisenhower, his party and his Administration. Since I had been called to the Security Council, I dispatched Shiloah to a meeting of the Presidents' Club. From his report I gathered that he had a difficult hour. For the first time in our memory there was reluctance to justify Israel's action without reserve. Jewish leaders had been impressed by Israeli statements in previous weeks that we would not start a war. They found it hard to make a swift change in what they were telling their followers. Some suggested that Jewish reservations about Israel's step be openly published. In the end, however, more normal counsels prevailed, and the Jewish leaders rose with an expression of solidarity for Israel and an appeal to the United States to strengthen Israel's security and Middle Eastern peace.

There had been an immense tumult in the Security Council on the morning of October 30. The French representative, Bernard Cornut-Gentille, presided with manifest discomfort. The agenda item was the U.S. proposal for "steps for immediate termination of Israeli military activity in Egypt." The Egyptian delegate and I were called to the table. The U.S. representative, Henry Cabot Lodge, expressed his government's shock at the Israeli action which had been taken "twenty-four hours after the personal appeal of Eisenhower to the Israeli Prime Minister." He called on the Council to take immediate measures for Israeli withdrawal to the armistice line. He asked all members of the United Nations to abstain from extending any aid which might prolong the hostilities.

Secretary-General Hammarskjöld now conveyed the information that he had received from his representative in the area, Canadian General E. M. Burns. There were speeches by Yugoslavia, Iran, the Soviet Union, Australia, China, Cuba, Peru and Egypt. The Soviet delegate, Arkady Sobolev, quoted a news item from London about the intention of Britain and France to intervene in Egypt. This was received in tense silence. There was a growing conviction that we were not discussing a mere Israeli-Egyptian clash. Newspapermen scurried to and fro, preparing for surprises.

The debate had gone on for a long time without a single word from the French or British representative. Tension became immense when the British delegate, Sir Pierson Dixon, announced that he was expecting an important declaration which was now being put out by the British Prime Minister, and that as soon as it reached him, he would communicate it to the Council. It seemed that the French delegate already knew more than his British colleague. Cornut-Gentille took me aside while the session was in progress and whispered, "Don't worry, there will be a veto." This was the first hint that reached me that we were not alone.

The session was resumed at four o'clock. It opened with a bombshell. The British delegate read a declaration by his Prime Minister about an Anglo-French ultimatum that been handed to Egypt and Israel calling on them "to remove their troops to a distance of ten miles from the Suez Canal." The French representative made an identical speech. Since we were nowhere near the Canal, we would have to "remove ourselves" forward in order to obey the ultimatum.

The sudden revelation that Britain and France were taking an active part in the Israeli operation acted like oil on fire. Lodge made a passionate address calling for the immediate approval of the American resolution before a dangerous complication caused the peace of the area to go up in flames. His resolution called for withdrawal to the armistice lines, the strict observance of the armistice agreement, and the duty of all member states to withhold all military, economic or financial aid for Israel until she complied with the resolution. The Soviet representative now asked for strong condemnation of Israel—but he was willing, if necessary, to accept the more "moderate" American text. In the debate that now followed, Israel found itself with unusually strong support. France, Britain and, somewhat less heatedly, Australia and Belgium were trying to save time and to delay the Security Council's action. On the other hand, the United States and the Soviet Union were arrayed in an unusual alliance against us.

I took the floor to describe the *fedayeen* raids, the threats to Israel's existence, the impotence of the United Nations and the Egyptian "paradox of unilateral belligerency." Relying on a communication that I had received from our Foreign Ministry, I stated categorically that we did not intend to acquire new territories, but merely to eliminate threats to our security arising from the murder gangs and hostile armies.

Eventually the American resolution was put to the vote. There were seven in favor. Australia and Belgium abstained, and Britain and France registered negative votes that amounted to a double veto. The chairman announced that the resolution had not been adopted.

It was now clear that there could not be any decisive action in the Security Council. Any continuation of its discussions would be mere propaganda. A spectacular split had taken place between the United States and its traditional allies. We found ourselves in stronger company than usual. Two permanent members of the Security Council were on our side. After the vote Sobolev, the Soviet representative, called for a shorter resolution, shorn of all criticism or condemnation or threat of sanctions, calling for an immediate cease-fire. The majority voted to suspend discussions for an hour and a quarter. When the Security Council reassembled at nine in the evening, the Soviet resolutions received seven votes, with Belgium and Australia abstaining and Britain and France again voting against. This resolution, too, had failed. Various suggestions for adopting a cease-fire resolution under diverse texts were defeated by negative British and French votes.

When Lodge saw that he was having no effect against British and French opposition, he asked the Security Council to stop further voting.

The British and French positions had an electric effect on public opinion. Many Americans began to ask whether U.S. policy might have driven America's allies to desperation. Israel was now relieved of the brunt of hostile opinion, which fell mainly on Britain and France.

The next day, October 31, the Security Council convened again. It was reported that the Israeli government had accepted the Anglo-French "ultimatum," whereas Egypt had rejected it, whereupon British and French planes had begun to bomb Egypt as a preliminary to military landings. In the Council's discussions the British delegate strongly denied that Britain and France had acted in common cause with Israel. He asserted that his government "did not support Israeli intentions to capture Egyptian territories." In fact, he thought that Israel should remove its forces as soon as suitable arrangements could be made. Britain "had no doubt that in crossing the Egyptian boundary Israel had violated the armistice agreement"!

In the light of what we subsequently heard about the Sèvres meeting and Eden's dynamic role in the whole operation, the sanctimonious tone of this statement was very hard to take. At the same time the Security Council was paralyzed. The United Nations aspect of the Suez operation had been planned by London, Paris and Jerusalem on the assumption that the British and French vetoes would remove the United Nations from the arena. This action took astonishingly little account of the constitutional change in the UN system under the Uniting for Peace resolution of 1951, which enabled the General Assembly to act if the Security Council was deadlocked by veto.

An emergency meeting of the General Assembly was fixed for November 1, at five-thirty, but by now we had another adversary who strongly reinforced the American and Soviet positions. Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, in a voice shaking with emotion, read out "a personal declaration" which was interpreted as a threat to resign in protest against British and French violations of their Charter obligations. He began with a statement of his beliefs about the role of the UN and its Secretary-General. He said that the principles of the Charter were infinitely more important than the organization that embodied them. The aims which those principles were designed to fulfill had a greater sanctity than the policy of any state or people. In order to preserve the efficacy of the organization, its Secretary-General must abstain from taking a public position in relation to a conflict between member states unless taking such a position would assist to remove the conflict. It was inadmissible to maneuver the organization into a policy of expediency. A Secretary-General could not fulfill his function except on the assumption that all members of the UN, especially the permanent members of the Security Council, would carry out their obligations. If there were members who believed that the welfare of the organization required a different conception of the Secretary-General's function, it was their right to act accordingly.

Hammarskjöld had a refined sense of drama, and his passionate speech had a sharp effect on the news media. It was obvious that his position would be based not on geopolitical realities or general equities, but on a legalistic interpretation of what the Charter allowed or forbade. World opinion, shattered by the impotence of the Security Council and the suddenness with which the conflict had erupted, was looking for an international hero. Hammarskjöld rose toward that vocation. There was an air of deliberate martyrdom in his bearing. A chorus of loyalty and almost of worship went up loudly around the table.

There was total confusion in the White House. The breakdown of the Western alliance was a more crushing event than an eruption of familiar violence between Egypt and Israel. The fact that the United States found itself arrayed with the Soviet Union against its allies, England and France, could only be interpreted as a sad failure of American foreign policy. The election atmosphere added fuel to the fire. Adlai Stevenson, in a speech delivered on the evening of October 29, condemned the failure of American policy in the Middle East, and accused the Administration of having deceived the nation. He was referring to statements made by Republican spokesmen only a few days before to the effect that American policy in the Middle East "was developing well." The tension was especially heavy in New York. The Democratic candidate for the Senate, Robert Wagner, a Catholic, was running against the Republican candidate Jacob Javits, a stalwart member of the Jewish community. There was a possibility that if Javits was elected, a Republican majority would be ensured in the Senate. I knew both candidates personally. While Wagner was free to criticize the Administration's foreign policy, the unfortunate Javits, not for the first or last time, was inhibited by his loyalty to the Administration policy.

On October 30 Sherman Adams, President Eisenhower's chief of staff at the White House, got in touch with Abba Hillel Silver and requested him to convey to Ben Gurion that the President intended to broadcast to the nation the next day and would like to abstain from any condemnation of Israel. Therefore, he wished to receive a promise that Israel would not retain her forces in the area that she had occupied. He wanted Ben Gurion to announce that since the Israeli forces had now completed their mission, namely the liquidation of the *fedayeen* bases, they would return to the previous boundary. If we were to do this, the President would include in his broadcast a statement of deep appreciation and of friendship toward Israel. Eisenhower added that even though it seemed that there was a convergence of interests between Israel and those of Britain and France, "the fact is that Israel's power and future are in fact bound up with the United States." Silver gave me this message and at my suggestion telephoned it personally to Ben Gurion. The Prime Minister said, "The enemy is listening and I cannot possibly tell you now if we will withdraw or not." I had a similar conversation with Ben Gurion that evening.

On the morning of October 31 I met leaders of the American Jewish Committee led by Jacob Blaustein and Joseph Proskauer. They did not criticize but gave friendly advice that we should regard time as an important factor. We should do everything we could to bring the operation to a speedy conclusion before the danger of a world war arose. Judge Proskauer was impressed by my exposition of our situation. He therefore suggested that I bring it to the attention of Governor Thomas Dewey, the titular head of the Republican Party who had run unsuccessfully against Roosevelt and Truman in the last election campaigns and who had Eisenhower's ear.

I immediately went down to Wall Street and had a long talk with Dewey. According to him, Eisenhower's chief apprehension lay in the suspicion that we intended a permanent occupation. Dewey added that there was a view in the Pentagon that if the hostilities did not come to an early end, there would be a danger of Soviet intervention, and therefore of a world conflagration. I immediately conveyed this to Ben Gurion and suggested that whatever his policy was, he should make some statement of it to President Eisenhower. I added, on the basis of my contacts, that one school of thought in the Pentagon considered that it might be better to bring down Nasser and thereby reduce Soviet influence in the Middle East. But even those who took that view emphasized the need for a speedy end of hostilities.

On October 31 Ben Gurion sent me his reply to the message from Eisenhower through Sherman Adams to Silver. I passed it on to Silver in Cleveland so that he could telephone it to the White House. At Proskauer's suggestion I also made the text available to Governor Dewey. In his reply Ben Gurion stated that he would be prepared to suggest the withdrawal of our forces if Nasser would sign a peace treaty including clear assurances to abstain from hostile acts against Israel. This would have to include the dispersion of the *fedayeen* units, the abolition of the economic boycott, the stoppage of the blockade in the Red Sea and the Suez Canal and abstention from any military alliance against Israel. On the other hand, the withdrawal of our forces from the area before a peace agreement was signed by Nasser would be suicidal. Ben Gurion expressed the hope that the President would not regard the present action of Israel as a disruption of the Israeli-American friendship. That friendship was one of the most cherished assets of the Israeli government and people. "Israel would always attach priority to its relations with the United States." But he feared that if Israeli forces left the area before peace was concluded, Nasser would strengthen the maritime blockade in the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, would reinforce his army and develop his cooperation with other Arab armies with the aim of bringing about our destruction. He added—not very diplomatically—that Israel's action had now flowed into the same channel as that of two friendly nations, France and Britain, who, like us, understood the danger to peace in our area arising from the Nasser regime's expansionist appetite. While he would bring President Eisenhower's appeal to the attention of the Israeli government, the Prime Minister, "in accordance with the dictates of decency and common interest," would have to consult with the governments of Britain and France.

In transmitting this message, I pointed out to the White House that for the first time there was now an authoritative description of our war aims. The aim was not territorial expansion, but the assurance of stability, peace and the elimination of active hostilities.

Ben Gurion's message reached the White House at four in the afternoon on November 1; it appears to have had some influence on Eisenhower's speech. In sending it to Ben Gurion, I said that if he read the text carefully he would see that despite the present crisis, the prospects for our political struggle in the United States were improving. Instead of the savage reactions of the first twenty-four hours, we now had a measured statement in which responsibility was put on Egypt and not only on Israel, Britain and France. The three of us were described as allies and friends who had a right to act in their own interest, even if they evoked American dissent. There was an implication of willingness to repair the relations between the United States and the three "allies and friends."

On the morning of November 1 I had telephone conversations with Golda Meir and Shimon Peres in Tel Aviv. They told me about the brilliant success of our military operations: our forces had come within ten miles of the Suez Canal; most of Sinai and the Gaza Strip were in our hands. The crew of an Egyptian warship that had tried to bomb Haifa had surrendered and been taken prisoner together with its ship; the Egyptian armies in Sinai had collapsed and were completely broken. Thousands of prisoners had been taken; enormous quantities of arms and equipment had come into our hands.

Encouraged by this news, I flew to Washington for my talk with Dulles. Since my plane from New York was delayed that night, the meeting was put off to the following day. I expected that Dulles would threaten us with economic sanctions. We already had indications of this in the State Department. Everything had been frozen. The journey of a team of the Export-Import Bank which was supposed to recommend a new loan of $75 million had been held up. So, too, had negotiations on the utilization of the residue of the grant-in-aid and the Food Surplus Agreement. Even the small technical-assistance program had been held in abeyance.

My talk with Dulles was brief but significant. Shiloah and Frazer Wilkins took part. Dulles said that the U.S. government was naturally looking at its aid programs, but he would first like to hear about our intentions. Did we intend to remain in Sinai or go back to the previous boundary after carrying out the mission that we had assumed?

The news I had received that morning about our military victory changed my approach to this conversation. I decided to go on the offensive. I said rather grandly, with an opulent sweep of my hand, that with all the importance of the money which we appreciated very deeply, my own mind was occupied by fundamental thoughts about the future of our region. "The military power of Nasser is in collapse," I added. "His prestige is sinking. It is possible to bring him down and thereby to deal a heavy blow to Soviet influence in the Middle East, simultaneously with Soviet troubles in Europe. In this revolutionary situation a crucial hour has been reached. The aim should be not to restore a situation charged with explosiveness, but rather to make a dramatic leap forward to peace. I am convinced that if a regime like that of Nasser had managed to consolidate itself in the Western hemisphere under Soviet influence, the United States would have intervened strongly, even if distant countries took a dissenting attitude. I ended my short remarks by suggesting that he should try to digest what I had said and to think in broad strategic terms of a durable solution.

When the talk began, Dulles had been tense and angry, but when I launched into a description of the global implications I could see that he understood the complexities. The question of economic aid which had been the reason for our meeting was completely forgotten. In his book *Dulles Over Suez,* Professor Herman Finer describes the scene:

> *Dulles thrust his hands deeper into his trouser pockets and wrinkled his brow, as he strode around the office. Eban's conceptions were big and he liked them. "Look," he said, "I'm terribly torn. No-one can be happier than I am that Nasser has been defeated. Since spring I've only had cause to detest him.*
>
> *"Yet can we accept a good end when it is achieved by means that violate the Charter? Look here, we could improve our position in the world if we used force, say, in Korea or Quemoy or in Germany. But if we did that the UN would collapse. So I am forced to turn back to the Charter. I have to work on the basis that the long-term interests of the United States and the world are superior to these considerations of self-benefit."*

Dulles seemed to be saying that even if conflicts could be satisfactorily resolved, it would be better not to resolve them if the consequence would be to weaken the United Nations system! He asked, "Do you think we should have one standard of reaction to our adversaries and another standard for our friends?" To his dismay I replied, "Yes, Mr. Secretary, I do. That is what friendship is about."

At any rate, there was a more relaxed atmosphere. As I rose to leave, Dulles said with a vestige of a smile, "You must admit I was right when I told you that your military position was not all that bad and you didn't have to be so alarmed about Egypt receiving Soviet arms." This seemed to amuse him inordinately, and his unaccustomed laughter followed me down the corridor.

The General Assembly meeting opened at five o'clock on October 31. The General Assembly Hall had never been so crowded, nor had there ever been a debate charged with such tension since the UN was established. It was estimated that some 70 million people were watching the proceedings on the television.

All the early speakers called for a cease-fire. The Arabs also requested a strong condemnation and sanctions. A resolution was introduced by Dulles, who opened on a personal note, expressing doubt that anybody had ever addressed the United Nations with such a heavy heart. The United States found itself in conflict with three countries to which it was bound by deep ties of friendship, admiration and respect. Two of them were its oldest and most faithful allies. He admitted that there were "provocations" and that there had been a certain measure of "neglect by the United States" in dealing with Middle Eastern problems. But all that could not justify recourse to force. He argued that even though Israel had a just grievance, since Egypt had never conformed with the Security Council resolution of 1951 recognizing Israel's right to use the Canal, there was surely a better prospect to satisfy this interest by peaceful means.

My own turn to speak was to come late that night. The feverish pace of events had given me no possibility to prepare a set speech. Yet a major challenge now lay ahead. I would be able to address tens of millions of television viewers, radio listeners and newspaper readers across the globe. There had never been such an opportunity to tell the world what the Israeli enterprise meant and implied. Having made certain that some of our friends, especially from Latin America, would keep the debate going for a couple of hours, I adjourned to the Westbury Hotel Restaurant on East Seventieth Street, just opposite our delegation building. I took with me a faithful friend, Dr. Jacob Robinson, our legal adviser, with whom I explored the idea of defending our action in terms of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. This provides for the exercise of the "inherent right of self-defense." This meant, of course, that I would totally separate the Israeli action from the more dubious motives that had inspired the British and French interventions. When Robinson left, I borrowed a pencil and a few pieces of paper from the waiter and hurriedly wrote out a few main headings for my speech. There would certainly not be time to prepare a formulated and mimeographed text.

When I got back to the Assembly Hall at ten-thirty, a telephone call came from David Sarnoff, president of the Radio Corporation of America, who may well be regarded as the founder of modern telecommunications in the United States. Sarnoff said that if I could arrange to come on the air at eleven-thirty or later, I would get complete national coverage, since all the regular television programs would be over. It was nearly midnight when I rose to make my address. The French and British delegates had been brief and apologetic; in the case of Pierson Dixon, his brevity probably reflected his lack of personal enthusiasm for the cause that he was defending. Cornut-Gentille was very close to a nervous collapse and had handed over to his deputy, Louis de Guiringaud (now Foreign Minister).

In my first sentence I plunged straight to the heart of our decision and action:

> *On Monday, 29 October, the Israel Defense Forces took security measures in the Sinai Peninsula in the exercise of our country's inherent right of self-defense. The object of these operations is to eliminate the bases from which armed Egyptian units, under the special care and authority of Colonel Nasser, invade Israel's territory for murder, sabotage and the creation of permanent insecurity to peaceful life.*

But it was my determination that evening to transcend the immediate hostilities, which were nothing but the symptom of a deeper reality:

> *Stretching far back behind the events of this week lies the unique and somber story of a small people, subjected throughout all the years of its national existence to a furious, implacable, comprehensive campaign of hatred and siege for which there is no parallel or precedent in the modern history of nations. Not for one single moment throughout the entire period of its modern national existence has Israel enjoyed that minimal physical security which the United Nations Charter confers on all member states, and which all other member states have been able to command.*
>
> *Whatever rights are enjoyed by other members of this Organiza-*

> *tion belong to Israel without addition or diminution. Whatever obligation any member state owes to another, Egypt owes to Israel and Israel to Egypt.*

Then, looking straight at my audience, I delivered what the newspapers the next day called the "punchline," in words which have often been quoted since:

> *Surrounded by hostile armies on all its land frontiers; subjected to savage and relentless hostility; exposed to penetration, raids and assaults by day and by night; suffering constant toll of life among its citizenry; bombarded by threats of neighboring governments to accomplish its extinction by armed force; overshadowed by a new menace of irresponsible rearmament—embattled, blockaded, besieged, Israel alone amongst the nations faces a battle for its security anew with every approaching nightfall and every rising dawn. . . .*
>
> *In recent days, the government of Israel had to face a tormenting question. Do its obligations under the United Nations Charter require it to resign itself to uninterrupted activity to the south and north and east of armed units practicing open warfare against it, and working from their bases in the Sinai Peninsula and elsewhere for the invasion of our homes, our land and our very lives? Or on the other hand, are we acting legitimately within our inherent right of self-defense when, having found no other remedy for two years,* we cross the frontier against those who have no scruples in crossing the frontier against us?
>
> . . . *There* is *aggression. There* is *belligerency in the Middle East, but we for eight years have been its victims and not its authors. That is what I mean when I say that world opinion should decide whom to trust. Should it be the small, free people establishing its homeland in peace and constructive progress? Or shall it be the dictatorship which has bullied and blustered and blackmailed its way across the international life of our times, threatening peace in many continents, openly avowing belligerency, placing its fist upon the jugular vein of the world's communications, bringing the Middle East and the world ever nearer to the threshold of conflict, intimidating all those who stand in its path; all except one people, at least, that will not be intimidated; one people whom no dictator has ever intimidated. The people that has risen up against all the tyrants of history. The people that knows that the appeasement of despots yields nothing but an uneasy respite, and that a Government that allowed its own citizens to be murdered daily in their homes would lose the dignity and justification for which governments are instituted amongst men.*

Israel has no desire or intention to wield arms beyond the limit of its legitimate defensive mission. But whatever is demanded of us by way of restoring Egypt's rights and respecting Egypt's security must surely be accompanied by equally binding Egyptian undertakings to respect Israel's security and Israel's rights.

Our signpost is not backward to belligerency, but forward to peace.

As I went down from the rostrum and walked across the aisle back to my seat, a cascade of applause arose all around me, growing in intensity, sometimes accompanied by emotional stamping of feet. It was a moment both of exhaustion and of relief. The exhaustion belonged to the tension of recent days and the knowledge that I had been afforded a unique opportunity to affect the direction of world opinion. The relief came from the feeling that I had got something off Israel's chest that had badly needed saying. No matter what the political outcome might be, the cathartic liberation from a pent-up grievance would have a healing effect, not only on me, but more important, on the besieged, tormented people for whom I had spoken.

The General Assembly, as expected, adopted the American resolution on cease-fire and the withdrawal of forces. It was past two o'clock in the morning when the vote came. There were 64 in favor of the American resolution, 5 against—Britain, France, Israel, Australia and New Zealand—with 6 abstentions. I went down into the lobby. Dulles was waiting for his car, together with Herman Phleger, the legal adviser to the State Department. I thought that Dulles looked haggard and yellow. Advancing toward me for what became a much photographed handshake, he chewed and swallowed nervously, as was his habit. Then, with typically forensic professionalism, he began to ask me about technicalities: "Listen, you didn't seem to be reading. Did you have a manuscript?" I told him that owing to pressure of time I had not prepared my speech at all but had formulated it on the basis of a few notes. I took out the pieces of paper on which I had written about twenty lines at the Westbury Hotel. He looked hard at me and made a memorable reply, "Jesus Christ," as he strolled away. I was told that this was the only occasion on which this austere churchman had been heard to utter the familiar but irreverent expletive.

On November 2 I had satisfying echoes from my address the previous night. The radio and television stations kept repeating a full transmission of it. Our delegation, with miraculous speed, produced a verbatim copy. About six hundred telegrams reached me on that day, and by the end of a week the number had gone into the thousands. An enterprising company put a record into the stores within a few days.

One of the countries that had abstained in the vote in the early hours of November 2 was Canada, which was obviously caught up in a clash of loyalties between her British and French origins and her American proximity. In my talk with Pearson that night, I had found him divided within himself. He obviously thought that Nasser had been provocative; on the other hand, Pearson was a zealot of the United Nations idea and a firm supporter of its law. I got the impression that he would have been happier if Israel had acted alone, in self-defense, rather than within the framework of a joint operation with Britain and France. In a memorable address explaining his abstention, he suggested that the General Assembly should use the cease-fire not simply for deadlock, but for advancing a political solution of the problems of the Suez Canal and the Arab-Israeli relationship. He threw an idea into the air that was to play a central role in future events: the United Nations should establish an international force that would ensure the maintenance of peace on the boundaries.

In later months and years the UN peacekeeping role developed quickly, and Pearson was awarded the Nobel Prize. There is, however, a view that the concept was born in the United States, and that its authors included Dulles, Herman Phleger and David Wainhouse, an able American Jew who worked in the State Department's Office of UN Affairs. It was clear that the United States could not propose a UN force without evoking a suspicious reaction from the Soviet Union, which would never agree to an American presence, even under the UN flag, without a concurrent Soviet presence. The United States, therefore, decided to find a respectable neutral country that would make the proposal. Henry Cabot Lodge decided that he would "sell" the idea either to Brazil or to Canada. When he got into the elevator at United Nations headquarters, Lester Pearson happened to be there, while the Brazilian delegate was nowhere to be seen.

Whether or not we accept Lodge's anecdote, the fact remains that it was Lester Pearson's eloquence and prestige that caused the UN General Assembly to adopt his proposal in a few days.

In cabling home to Ben Gurion and Golda Meir, I pointed out that the United States resolution contained a few loopholes within which we could maneuver. The references in the Security Council text to withholding aid from Israel had been omitted. The General Assembly had determined that our neighbors had often violated the armistice agreement. Most important of all, there was a gap of time between the cease-fire and the withdrawal of forces. The cease-fire was to be "immediate," while the withdrawal of forces was to take place "as soon as possible."

The paradox was that Israel was now closer to a readiness for cease-fire than Britain and France. We had almost accomplished our military aim while they had not seriously begun theirs. Indeed, on November 3, when the cease-fire was to go into effect, we had nearly all of Sinai, except Sharm el-Sheikh, in our hands. The Anglo-French landing in the Canal Zone had not begun at all. Britain and France therefore rejected the call for a cease-fire. I continued to say that while we accepted the cease-fire "in principle," it must be accompanied by an assurance about Egypt's peaceful intention. I made this clear in a memorandum I gave Secretary-General Hammarskjöld in November.

When I had let it be known that we saw no objection to a cease-fire, I received an agitated telephone call from the Foreign Ministry in Tel Aviv. I was told that while we had very little more to do in the field, the French and the British were embarrassed by the idea that we would cease fire before they had begun. This was the only occasion in my experience on which other powers ever have objected to Israel ceasing fire too soon.

On November 3 and 4 I became reinforced in my conviction that our efforts in Washington and the UN had not been in vain. The American position seemed to be emerging out of rage into lucidity. Lodge now proposed two resolutions. The first called for the Palestine Conciliation Commission to conclude its work and be succeeded by a committee of five which would investigate the problem and bring recommendations to the United Nations. The second resolution concerned the Suez Canal. It called for the establishment of a committee of three—Egypt, Britain and France—to work out a procedure for activating the Canal for free navigation.

The American attitude had clearly moved far in our direction. Anxious Asian and pro-Arab states came to the forum attempting to drown Lodge's "revisionist" ideas with heated affirmations of the need to concentrate exclusively on a cease-fire and withdrawal of forces. Lodge had no course but to accept priority for the Canadian resolution asking the Secretary-General to establish an international force in the next forty-eight hours. He announced that the United States would not press for action on its two resolutions at that stage.

Remarkable staff work by Hammarskjöld, Bunche and the UN Secretariat made it possible for a United Nations Emergency Force to be proposed in the General Assembly on November 5. In Israel we had not given much consideration to this concept, and my own speech on the motion was noncommittal. I could only promise to clarify the Israeli policy after consultation with my government.

At three-thirty on the morning of November 5 the General Assembly adopted the Canadian resolution, with 16 abstentions, including the Soviet bloc, France, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Israel and Egypt. It also adopted a repeated call for withdrawal to which, again, there were 5 opposing votes—Israel, France, Britain, New Zealand and Australia.

Soviet opposition to the plan for a UN force was instructive. It indicated Moscow's sensitivity about a force which would probably be confined to Western and neutral countries and which would reflect the power of the pro-American majority in the General Assembly. The Soviet Union was also traumatically affected by the memory of a previous "United Nations force" which had in fact been a cover for an American operation under General Douglas MacArthur in Korea. On the other hand, Egypt, despite her discreet abstention, was very interested in the UNEF proposal. Obviously there was no hope of ensuring a complete evacuation of troops from her territory unless the initial recipient of the occupied areas was an authority other than the Egyptian government itself.

At dawn on November 5, the airborne assault by Britain and France on the Canal Zone began at last. Having been late in its commencement, it was now to be ineffective in its execution. The attack naturally brought about a vast intensification of international pressures. This time the Soviet resolution in the Security Council calling for a cease-fire stipulated that it must come into effect "within twelve hours." The Soviet proposal went on to say that if this did not happen, the United States and the Soviet Union as two countries with air and sea power should help Egypt with weapons, volunteers and other military means. This proposal was supported only by Yugoslavia and Iran. Four countries, including the United States, voted against. Lodge said that any idea of joint Soviet and American forces in the area was "unthinkable."

We were now to come under the cruelest international pressure that we, or perhaps any small nation, had known in the postwar era. On the evening of November 5 Ben Gurion received a letter from Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin. Israel was accused of "criminal acts and of acting as an instrument of external imperialistic forces." Then came the menace:

> *The Government of Israel is criminally and irresponsibly playing with the fate of the world, with the fate of its own people. It*

is sowing hatred of the State of Israel amongst the Eastern peoples, such as cannot but leave its mark on the future of Israel and places in question the very existence of Israel as a state. *The Soviet Government is at this moment taking steps to put an end to the war and to restrain the aggressors. The Government of Israel should consider before it is too late. We hope that the Government of Israel will fully understand and appreciate this warning of ours.*

This brutal letter, together with a more friendly but very exigent note from Eisenhower, created something close to panic in Israel. Our first task was to find out how other countries reacted, and for this purpose Ben Gurion asked Foreign Minister Golda Meir, together with Shimon Peres, to go to Paris for advice. In conversations with French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau, it appeared that France took the Soviet threat very literally. He said to his Israeli interlocutors, "We have no means of defense against missiles. I suggest that you do not belittle Bulganin's warning." On the other hand, the French Defense Minister, Maurice Bourgès-Maunoury, telephoned Peres to say, "In truth, I have no precise documentary evidence, but in my view the Soviet threat is nothing but a bluff. They will not create the danger of a third world war. This is only a personal opinion, but it is well that you should take this too into account."

But from Israel came a picture of a people in the full flush of victory. All of a sudden the hands clutching at our throat had been torn away. We could breathe freely again. The consequent exuberance was understandable, but it may well have passed the limits of rationality. In a "victory speech" to the Knesset on the evening of November 7, Ben Gurion said with some hyperbole, "This was the greatest and most glorious military operation in the annals of our people, and one of the most remarkable operations in world history."

Ben Gurion now went far beyond any of the positions that I had been empowered to take up in the Security Council and the General Assembly. In all my speeches I had stated clearly that the people of Israel had "no desire to wield arms beyond their legitimate defensive mission." I also strongly implied, at Ben Gurion's behest, that we did not regard ourselves as having a need of permanent presence in Sinai or Gaza. Indeed, I already knew from Jerusalem that before launching our military operation, Ben Gurion had told Mapam ministers and others that there was no prospect whatever of Israel being allowed to remain in Sinai, and that our real aims were the opening of the straits and the creation of tranquillity on our border facing the Gaza Strip. All this, however, had been forgotten on November 7. Ben Gurion now stated "with full force and unflinching determination:

- The armistice agreement with Egypt is dead and buried and cannot be restored to life.
- In consequence, the armistice lines between Israel and Egypt have no more validity.
- We are ready to enter into negotiations for a stable peace, cooperation and good neighborly relations with Egypt on condition that they are direct negotiations, without prior conditions on either side and not under duress from any quarter whatsoever.
- On no account will Israel agree to the stationing of a foreign force, no matter how called, in her territory or in any of the areas occupied by her.

From the moment that I heard this address, I saw it as a political error. There was no chance whatever that Ben Gurion could maintain those positions, and to retreat from them would affect our credibility. He was alienating not only Israel's adversaries but also her friends. Lester Pearson said to me that day that whatever sympathy for Israel had existed in the United Nations and elsewhere had been unaccountably thrown away by Ben Gurion. "That speech must have been as offensive to the British, the French, the Americans and to us Canadians as it was to the Arabs," Pearson went on. "If you people persist with this, you run the risk of losing all your friends."

The general reaction to Ben Gurion's speech was confusion and consternation. The pressure for our withdrawal increased. Much of the understanding that we had acquired after October 29 was now dissipated. One indication was the total isolation of Israel in the General Assembly on the night of November 7. The vote for an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal was now 65 to 1—Israel. Britain, France, their NATO allies and Australia and New Zealand abstained. I had to leave the General Assembly to meet the Jewish leaders, leaving my able deputy, Reggie Kidron, behind. He told me later that to cast a sole negative vote had given him a macabre feeling of Jewish solitude.

Finding us isolated even from our closest friends, Hammarskjöld swooped down for the political kill. In remarks to newspapermen he blamed Israel for endangering world peace and raised doubts about her future "existence." He also refused to discuss any claims or grievances until we agreed to withdraw.

Many explanations have been given for Ben Gurion's unexpected speech of November 7. Ben Gurion's principal adviser at that time, Yaacov Herzog, said, "One must place it in the atmosphere of the time. Ben Gurion and all Israelis felt that we must terminate the nightmare once and for all, *fedayeen* raids, threats of annihilation. We were playing for big stakes—peace." Shimon Peres, however, held the view that Ben Gurion gave a calculated impression of a plan to annex Sinai merely as a bargaining device to secure free passage through the Gulf. Mrs. Meir's view was: "I think Ben Gurion believed that we could stay in Sinai and Gaza. He did not take into consideration, nor did any of us, that the Soviet Union would respond as it did." Ben Gurion, however, gave a simpler and more innocent explanation: "I made a few mistakes in that speech, saying that the armistice agreement was dead and buried, that Egypt would not be allowed to return to Sinai. I went too far and it was against the views I had expressed in the Government on October 28, that they would not let us stay in Sinai—Russia, America, the UN, Africa and Asia." And then, after a thoughtful pause, the essential truth was stated with almost childlike innocence and veracity: "But you see, the victory was too quick. *I was too drunk with victory.*" *

Ben Gurion's speech on November 7 was made in full knowledge that the Soviets were threatening Israel in the most drastic terms. On that day, however, the clouds gathered thick and strong. A report was going around Paris that the Soviets intended to "flatten" Israel the next day. The French passed the grim news on to Israel. Our ambassador in Rome, Eliahu Sasson, cabled Jerusalem for transmission to me that the Soviet ambassador in Italy was making similar threats. Another source of worry was the knowledge that the U.S. ambassador in Paris had assured Guy Mollet that a Soviet missile attack on Britain or France would lead to American retaliation. Israel was conspicuously absent from this reassurance.

To the Soviet threat was now added American pressure. In the late afternoon of November 7 while I was at the United Nations, Shiloah called me from Washington to say that the reaction to Ben Gurion's Knesset speech was "terrible." Eisenhower had sent Ben Gurion an angry message through our embassy: Shiloah had been called to the State Department for a conversation with the Under-Secretary, Herbert Hoover Jr., who was acting for Dulles, now in the hospital with diagnosed cancer. Hoover had said, "I consider this to be the most important meeting ever held with Israeli representatives. Israel will be the first to be swallowed up by Soviet penetration. In these circumstances, Israel's attitude will inevitably lead to most serious measures such as the termination of all United States governmental and private aid, United Nations sanctions and eventual expulsion from the United Nations. I speak with the utmost seriousness and gravity."

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* Michael Brecher, *Decisions in Israel's Foreign Policy* (Yale University Press, 1974), p. 283.

Rountree, who was present, added, "We have been profoundly shocked at the report of the Prime Minister's latest speech." I telephoned these messages to Ben Gurion via Yaacov Herzog at eight-thirty on November 8.

I now decided that I had to take responsibility by myself. Ben Gurion was clearly acting in the intoxicating atmosphere of Israel's victory and under strong militant pressure at home. I wanted to propose a formula which would enable us to satisfy the United States, if not the Soviet Union, while leaving the door open for us to resume our struggle in pursuit of our war aims. I cabled Ben Gurion reminding him that the world was waiting in great tension for his reply to Eisenhower's letter. I told him frankly that our friends in the Jewish community and throughout America and the United Nations wanted him to withdraw from his refusal to allow an international force into Sinai. My recommendation was that Israel should declare her willingness to withdraw from Sinai when satisfactory arrangements were made with the international force about to enter the Canal Zone. I added that we should make the announcement within twenty-four hours because of "growing evidence of Soviet plans to intervene."

Ben Gurion's first reaction was to ask me whether an immediate meeting between him and Eisenhower could be arranged, if necessary in secret. Eisenhower's mood at that moment was punitive. He was certainly not concerned to give Ben Gurion the prestige victory of a summit meeting. In fact, he asked Silver by telephone that night whether Ben Gurion's reputation for balance and rationality was really well founded.

Throughout November 7 the Soviet Union went on multiplying its threats that if the invading forces did not depart, the USSR would intervene. The United States took this threat seriously. It acted as though there was at least a contingency of world conflagration. The ships of the Sixth Fleet were ordered to sail onto the high seas to avoid a Pearl Harbor attack. I cabled Ben Gurion to say that whether the American appreciation of the situation was right or wrong, we had to take it as a fact. Washington would not be influenced either by our own representations or by Jewish pressures because, in its view, the peace of the world and the avoidance of an atomic war were now in the balance. My appraisal was that the United States would not use armed force to remove us from Sinai, at least at that stage, but that it would exercise its maximum influence to bring about our agreement for our withdrawal and the entry of the international force. I added that although what I was saying should be taken in full gravity, I still thought that I could get international agreement for the nonentry of Egyptian forces into Gaza and Sinai, including Sharm el-Sheikh.

The Israeli Cabinet now went into uninterrupted session on November 7 from five o'clock until after midnight. Aranne and Sapir, in the most vehement tones, said that the nation was in danger. The peril of destruction was real. History would never forgive the Israeli government if another holocaust ensued. With the Cabinet in a mood of intense alarm, it was agreed to put the responsibility on Ben Gurion.

I was now to be faced by one of the most extraordinary situations in which an ambassador has ever found himself. Ben Gurion did no more or less than transfer the crucial decision to me! His question was: Could we afford to accept my formula, making withdrawal conditional on "satisfactory arrangements with UN forces"? If this could be done, then our agreement could be given at once. We could continue for some days, weeks or even months to bargain about what was meant by "satisfactory arrangements with UN forces." On the other hand, if the result of this equivocation would be to bring about Soviet military intervention, we could not afford to hold our ground. Ben Gurion prepared two alternative texts of a speech to be broadcast to the nation: one accepting my formula of conditional and gradual withdrawal enabling us to fight for our major aims; the other announcing a readiness for "immediate and unconditional" withdrawal. Which of these texts would be used depended on how I would reply.

Yaacov Herzog, trembling with excitement, asked me to give my judgment. This was at nine o'clock in the evening. By eleven-thirty I had made soundings with John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, Walter Bedell Smith and others and had reached the conclusion that the acceptance of my formula would be satisfactory to the United States. In that case the Soviet attitude would become irrelevant, for the United States would deter the fulfillment or even the reiteration of Soviet threats. Yaacov Herzog and Gideon Rafael have recorded since then that Ben Gurion's reaction was: "If Eban really takes responsibility that it is feasible, then I agree." Shiloah and Kidron participated in the fateful consultation with me.

Three reasons inspired me to make my recommendation. First, the conditional sentence was important to gain time to continue our political struggle, and to ensure that evacuated areas would not be handed over to the Egyptian army. Second, a reply satisfactory to the

United States was essential to remove the danger of Soviet intervention. Third, if the Soviets abstained from intimidation because of possible United States reaction, then my formula of conditional withdrawal could be enough to dispel the crisis. Why concede everything? Professor Brecher has written:

> *This summation by Eban reflects the important role of a diplomat in the decision-making process. The strategic decision to withdraw was taken by Ben Gurion before consulting Israel's envoy in America. Eban's recommendation to retain the formula followed approval by the US Secretary of State. At the same time, his role was innovative and the burden of responsibility placed upon him on November 8 was very heavy. He reacted decisively. Finally, the formula permitted phased withdrawal and therefore ample time to secure concessions, the raison d'être of the political struggle to follow.*

I gave our compromise reply to Dulles, and Ben Gurion went ahead with his speech to the nation, which most listeners described as weary and dejected. But he told Israelis that we had three goals, none of which had yet been lost—the defeat of Egyptian armed forces; liberation of the territory of the homeland; and safeguarding of free navigation through the Gulf and the Canal.

The next morning I gave Hammarskjöld a reply identical to that which we had sent to Eisenhower. He expressed tremendous relief. The possibility that Ben Gurion's recalcitrance would lead to a world conflagration had been taken seriously in international quarters. As Yaacov Herzog has written: "There was a genuine fear of world war that day."

By now the Anglo-French landings and air bombings had subsided in ignominious sterility and our two European partners had fallen by the way. In their history, the Suez adventure was a turning point. In France it led to the rise of Gaullism and the virtual crumbling of the Atlantic orientation. In Britain it brought the imperial dream to an end, reminding Britain that she no longer had the power to sustain difficult international enterprises without American backing. Henceforward U.S.-Soviet hegemony was virtually ensured. Israeli policy makers were harshly reminded that no country except the United States could help us redress the adverse balance arising from the geopolitical predominance of the Arabs and their alliance with Soviet power. This is still the central truth of Israel's foreign policy today.

From November 7 onward I felt, paradoxically, that we were aided by our solitude. We no longer bore the stigma of collusion with Western imperialist interests. We were now struggling for the kind of Israeli aims that simple people all over the world could understand. We did not seek territorial aggrandizement. We sought free use of our maritime channels and freedom to live in peace in our homes.

During the next four months a political struggle developed which I look back on as one of the most satisfactory episodes in my public service. At the beginning the international position was that Israel should simply return to the previously held lines without any reward or compensation for her military sacrifice. Hammarskjöld upheld this doctrine with theological dogmatism, but it also had wide currency in the United States. I had said in my speech on November 1: "Least of all can we be satisfied to return to an imperfect armistice distorted by unilateral belligerency, to a system designed seven years ago as a transition to peace—and interpreted for seven years by one of the parties as a continuing state of war."

In a detailed cable from Jerusalem, Yaacov Herzog gave me clear directives to this effect from Ben Gurion: We should use the favorable atmosphere created by our offer of withdrawal and by the consequent American relief to secure "guarantees" that would effectively keep the Gulf of Aqaba (Eilat) open after our withdrawal and would prevent Gaza from reverting to *fedayeen* control. Ben Gurion also made it quite clear that he distinguished very sharply between "UN guarantees" that were worthless and probably unobtainable, and American guarantees that might satisfy our basic interests. I now set to work, together with Shiloah at the embassy and Kidron in our UN delegation, to ensure that our withdrawal would be exchanged for new situations in the Gulf and in the Gaza Strip.

I decided to make the focus of our effort the situation in the Straits of Tiran. Here, after all, was the possibility of a major change in Israel's geopolitical dimensions. If we could keep that artery open in the ensuing years, we would be saved from our exclusive dependence on the West across the Mediterranean. It would be possible to open an oil route to the Persian Gulf and to weave a network of connections and relationships with East Africa and Asia. This was one of the central visions that had inspired us in accepting the UN partition idea. It had been virtually frustrated by our exclusion from the Indian Ocean through the dual blockade in the Suez Canal and in the Gulf of Aqaba. I thought I could play on the inherent absurdity of returning to a status quo that meant the restoration of an illicit blockade. The idea of the United Nations exchanging an open international waterway for a blockaded one seemed to me to hold enough absurdity to make our persuasion feasible.

I therefore laid down a heavy bombardment of speeches, memoranda, meetings, pressures, influences all over the United States, with a special concentration on Dulles himself and on leaders in the Congress. I developed a close relationship with Dulles' legal adviser, Herman Phleger, because I had noticed the juridical emphasis in Dulles' way of thought. International law was once described as "the law that the righteous do not need and the wicked do not obey." I knew well that it is more frequent for legal advisers in Foreign Offices to give juridical sanction to what their ministers want than for ministers to change their policies as a result of legal advice. Nevertheless, if Dulles could be persuaded that there was a strong legality in our demand for an open waterway, I thought it unlikely that he would stubbornly insist on a return to belligerency and blockade.

In addition to Phleger, another ally was the senior American diplomat Robert Murphy, who had won fame as Roosevelt's representative during Eisenhower's military rule in North Africa. His experience had given him a special prestige with the President.

At the United Nations, Henry Cabot Lodge was less vehement and abrasive toward us now that we had offered to withdraw, but I feared that he was more closely influenced by Hammarskjöld's legalism than by the currents of thought in his own capital. Moreover, he was attracted by the idea projected by Vice-President Richard Nixon in a speech in December 1956, according to which the United States should take pride in having cut loose from its "colonialist allies" in order to adopt an independent attitude of friendship to the "developing world."

It had been agreed in my exchanges with Ben Gurion, through Yaacov Herzog, that I would fight to get American support on our case on Eilat and Gaza while, at home, we would take delaying action. We would withdraw in installments, quickly enough to avoid a political showdown with the UN and the United States, but not so quickly as to bring our forces out of Sinai and Gaza before achieving our minimal demands. When Hammarskjöld asked me, "Do you mean that your withdrawal is to be conditional on your getting your way?," I replied that words were of no importance to me at this stage. I was willing to abandon the principle of "conditionality" and to say that we insisted that our "unconditional" withdrawal should have "accompanying circumstances" including the abolition of the blockade and the establishment of peaceful conditions on the Gaza border.

In early February we went through a period of anxiety when King Saud of Saudi Arabia visited the United States and insisted fanatically that Israeli forces leave Sinai and Gaza that very week if the United States wanted oil supplies and bases. On this occasion, to my relief, Eisenhower and Dulles stood firm. The United States believed that Israel would withdraw, but it insisted on being given time to create suitable "circumstances" for the withdrawal.

In addition to the mobilization of congressional leaders and Administration figures, I was able to enlist the help of many elder statesmen who were close to the levers of power. I have always been impressed by the ability of U.S. Presidents and Secretaries of State to have recourse to distinguished people who hold no official position, but whose disinterested advice is warmly received. I had a close relationship with Arthur Dean, who was John Foster Dulles' law partner in Wall Street; with General Lucius Clay, the hero of Berlin, later a corporation president in New York; with John J. McCloy, who had been High Commissioner of the United States in Germany; with General Walter Bedell Smith, who had been Under-Secretary of State with Dulles, and even after retirement, had a closer relationship with President Eisenhower than Secretary Dulles was ever able to obtain; and with Robert Anderson, later to be Secretary of Defense, whose traumatic experience in Cairo in early 1956 had given him a warm understanding of our cause.

At last, in early February, the ice began to melt. Robert Murphy came to have breakfast with me in my home on Juniper Street. He told me that my latest memorandum on the illegality of the blockade in the Gulf of Eilat (Aqaba) had made a strong impression on Dulles and Phleger. He now wanted to ask me a straight question. "Which of your two demands is the most important? Free passage in the Gulf of Eilat or an international regime in Gaza?"

I told him that it was like asking a man whether he gave greater affection to his mother or his father, but that if I had to give a personal estimate, I would say that the maintenance of an open waterway at Eilat was a more stable and profound geopolitical interest than a situation in Gaza that could at best be temporary. On the other hand, I refused to believe that it was impossible to give substantive satisfaction to each of our demands. Even if we got full satisfaction about the Gulf of Eilat, we would not be able to withdraw unless we had a reasonable, if not watertight, assurance that Gaza would not again become a *fedayeen* nest.

Murphy said that he understood my reply perfectly. The point was that the United States had a greater capacity to satisfy our claims of free passage in the Gulf than to change the situation in Gaza, where Egypt had a contractual position under the armistice agreement. On the other hand, he felt that world opinion might be less opposed to a prolongation of Israel's tenure in Gaza if it thought that Israel would fully absorb into its own economy and society the 300,000 Arab refugees who were languishing in camps in that zone.

From this conversation onward, I felt that we were on a favorable road. I could afford to listen with patient skepticism to Nahum Goldmann, who, under Hammarskjöld's influence, was telling me that the United States would never offer Israel anything in the Gulf of Eilat or in Gaza in return for our withdrawal, which would have to be unconditional. Israel, said Goldmann, according to Hammarskjöld, would not be allowed to gain anything from its military initiative. It was, therefore, a waste of time to prolong the withdrawal.

One of my major assets was that the two party leaders in the Senate, Lyndon B. Johnson and William K. Knowland, were in close personal touch with me. They were in a mood to make the Eisenhower Administration's response to Israel's requests a condition for their support of the Administration's other proposals in the Middle East. Knowland announced that he had been affronted by the fact that the United Nations had surrendered to Soviet force in Hungary. If it now applied to Israel the kind of pressures that it refused to apply to the Soviet Union, he would regard the United Nations as a mischievous organization and would symbolize this by resigning from the United States delegation. Lyndon Johnson was no less emphatic. One day he called me at my embassy office and said, "Are they negotiating seriously with you [about Gaza and Aqaba]?" I asked him why he wanted to know. He replied that there was legislation in the Senate which he had the power to speed up or to slow down, and that he would be influenced by whether or not the Administration was "honestly trying" to come to terms with Israel. In his view the problems of Aqaba and Gaza were not so insoluble as to make it justifiable for the United States to apply punitive measures. If time is needed, then—hell—let time be given. By the second week of February I was able to cable to Herzog for Ben Gurion and Golda Meir that I saw "a breakthrough on the early horizon."

I had given Dulles a detailed memorandum on the Straits of Tiran on January 2. My theme was that Israel had endured a serious deprivation for eight years during which the straits had been closed to its shipping. My memorandum went beyond the juridical aspect to touch on a larger vision; a new artery of maritime communication linking the continents of the old world, depriving Suez of its monopoly and reducing Europe's explosive dependence on a single oil route which Egypt could open and close at will. By early February I had received encouraging comments on this memorandum from diplomats, jurists and political scientists. I had been told that Herman Phleger had recommended it to Dulles' favorable study.

Thus, when Dulles invited me to see him on February 11, I already knew that we had passed from confrontation to negotiation with the United States. In a memorandum to UN members on January 24, Hammarskjöld had come very close to the idea that even a sinful and illegal status quo must be restored if it had been changed by illicit force. He stressed that the status-quo principle forbade any Israeli presence, military or civilian, in Gaza; and that although the question of the Gulf of Eilat had a special character, it was important that the Israeli military action should "have no effect on its solution"! Hammarskjöld was thus becoming a blind defender of all pre–October 1956 situations. Everything had to be put back where it was, including the gasoline-soaked bonfire as close as possible to the box of matches. Not a single spark of political imagination illuminated the arid wastes of his legalism. Even his juridical doctrine was subjective. Hammarskjöld had some high and low moments in his extraordinary career. His reaction to the Middle Eastern security balance in the fifties was surely his lowest ebb. Even State Department officials, who had usually been rather worshipful of the Secretary-General, were now finding him hard to take. Ralph Bunche, normally a model of hierarchical loyalty, took me into his confidence one day for sad complaints about his chief, who, in his words, "sometimes tends to go berserk."

Robert Murphy had been correct in advising me to seek a settlement in the American context rather than at the UN. He also continued to emphasize that we should attach more importance to the Straits of Tiran issue than to the question of Gaza. These constructive thoughts were now having their effects on Lodge at the UN. On January 29 he had said, "It is important that units of the UNEF should be stationed in the Straits of Tiran to separate the forces of Israel and Egypt by land and sea, wherever such separation is essential until it becomes evident that there is no exercise of belligerent rights, and that passage in those waters which are of international significance goes forward peacefully." Lodge went on to say that the Assembly could not be satisfied "with a return to the disquieting situation which has brought about recent hostilities."

Our information campaign during January had spectacular success on the Eilat issue. Nearly all the reputable newspapers ridiculed the idea that the UN should restore a condition of belligerent blockade. On the other hand, I had to tell Jerusalem in all frankness that the same intense efforts devoted to a defense of our Gaza position were not having a similar result. With King Saud back home after his embarrassing Washington visit, the United States, despairing of any salvation from Hammarskjöld, decided to take the matter into its own hands.

In my meeting with Dulles on February 11, I was accompanied by Shiloah. The Secretary was attended by Murphy and Fraser Wilkins. Dulles began by reading the text of an *aide-mémoire*. The main points were that if Israel withdrew from Sinai and Gaza, the United States would announce its intention to exercise free passage in the Straits of Tiran and to encourage others to exercise that right. It would support the presence of the UN force in Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza for as long as necessary to avoid a recrudescence of belligerency.

Before I could respond, Dulles went on to say that the memorandum should be regarded as giving substantial satisfaction to Israel's positions. I said that it was clearly an important document and I would pass it to my government without delay. The question in our mind would be: To what degree does the memorandum guarantee that there will be no return to the vulnerabilities and illegalities out of which the October war erupted? Dulles replied that the United States had been sympathetic to Israeli aims before the war, and had only considered that the methods which Israel, Britain and France had used were erroneous and dangerous. The United States still believed that Israel's legitimate aims could be achieved by political means. He therefore wanted us to take a serious look at the American commitment on free passage in the paper that he had handed to me. Was not an American engagement far more valuable than a dubious declaration by Egypt on abstention from belligerency? He referred to what I had told him in previous talks about our plans for an oil pipeline from Eilat to the coast. He said that if Israel remained with its forces at Sharm el-Sheikh, there might well be a pipeline, but it was doubtful that anybody would put any oil into it.

I now asked him to clarify the American position on Gaza. Would the Israeli withdrawal be only of military forces or also of civilian personnel? Dulles was evasive. He said that he was not "well versed" in that problem and that the United States had not taken a definite position.

There was a sound of deep urgency in his voice. He said that the United States wanted to get into a posture of cooperation with Israel on the serious matters common to the two countries. There was a lot of talk of sanctions in the air, but such talk was not serious. "What are sanctions?" he said. "Surely the most serious sanction that could be inflicted on America and Israel would be a position in which these two enlightened governments would be shown incapable of cooperating in a pragmatic attempt to allay tension in the area. It would be disastrous if we are forced to confess failure."

Since I did not want to prejudice our bargaining position, I avoided further comment and broke off the conversation. Shiloah and I went to lunch with Murphy, who asked us to regard the memorandum as a sensational development. The United States would get the other maritime powers to join the doctrine of free and innocent passage in the Gulf of Eilat. The essence of the guarantee lay in the clear recognition that each maritime power would have a right to protect its own shipping. This would apply to Israel as well. The UN force would symbolize this freedom and ensure the absence of Egyptian soldiers. Murphy pressed me hard to get at least a preliminary favorable reply by February 14, that is, within three days. Our Foreign Minister, Golda Meir, had now reached UN headquarters, where she was leading our delegation, while I concentrated on the Washington scene. She recommended to Jerusalem that we regard the memorandum as "a basis for discussion," subject to working out more solid arrangements, especially in Gaza.

In the evening Dulles assembled press representatives and gave a detailed lecture on free passage in the Straits of Tiran. The American and world press wrote frankly of "a major Israeli success." Yet our tactical situation was more difficult. All friendly newspapers now released Dulles from their pressure and turned on us with an exigent hope that Israel would utilize the opening that had now been offered. The Washington *Post,* which had given us ardent support, wrote on February 13 that "it is now Israel's turn to be reasonable." The *New York Times* and the New York *Herald Tribune* spoke in a similar vein. James Reston called me three times that day to emphasize, with some emotion, that Israel would make a grave error if she neglected a historic opportunity to transform her status in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Eilat and—no less important—to achieve a new atmosphere of understanding with the United States.

Twelve maritime powers were approached by the United States with a request to join in elaborating the doctrine of free and innocent passage. At the United Nations the Arab delegates were in some confusion. Many of them were hoping that Israel would turn down the American proposition and that the punitive anti-Israeli atmosphere could be reconstructed.

I sent Ben Gurion a long cable explaining why I thought a propitious turning point had come. While we should bargain meticulously on specific issues, I thought that it would be an error to reject the February 11 memorandum. We should do everything to keep the UN General Assembly out of the picture, and in order to achieve this, we should give our assent to Dulles in principle and pursue a detailed discussion in greater leisure. Ben Gurion sent me his reactions on February 12. In effect his main conclusions were:

1. The memorandum showed a desire to achieve a positive solution, but the suggested solution was not positive, and we could not accept it.
2. There was no specific guarantee to protect Israeli shipping and the concept of free passage was limited to "innocent passage."
3. We could not possibly go back to the armistice agreement.
4. We could not agree to the stationing of UN forces at Nitsana (El Auja).
5. In Gaza there was room for compromise. We would agree to evacuate it on condition that the Egyptians did not come back; and that an Israeli civilian authority would cooperate with the UN for the benefit of the inhabitants of the area.

Ben Gurion added that we could not change the positions that he had outlined even if sanctions were threatened.

I could see that Ben Gurion had either failed in his usual perspicacity or, more probably, was under domestic pressures. The complaint about passage being "only innocent" seemed bizarre. "Innocent passage" only excluded trade in illicit traffic such as narcotics and white slaves. I did not imagine that our Zionist vision of the southern Negev had anything so picturesque or exotic in mind. I pointed out that even the passage of warships was not excluded by the term "innocent passage." I could not for the life of me understand what Ben Gurion's reference to Nitsana was about, since the Dulles memorandum contained no indication of stationing UN forces anywhere except in Gaza and in the Straits. In my cable home I said that the chief value of the memorandum lay in its treatment of the Straits of Tiran problem, rather than Gaza. I concluded by saying that a frontal rejection of the American memorandum would not bring us any serious support from our friends.

On February 15 I gave Dulles a new memorandum from Ben Gurion which expressed reluctant satisfaction over some elements in the February 11 *aide-mémoire,* but which still argued suspiciously about the text. I told Dulles that we were all impressed by his statement that "the United States would take a heavy responsibility if Israel were to withdraw and the blockade were to be renewed." Nevertheless, we were worried by the prospect that this was exactly what would happen if we withdrew before a peace agreement was concluded.

When Dulles read the Ben Gurion memorandum, his disappointment was vast. He said that in his opinion the government of Israel had failed to understand the spirit of the American initiative. The United States was not strictly making "proposals to Israel." As a member of the United Nations it could use its influence, and as a maritime power it could unilaterally carry out a certain policy toward the Gulf and the Straits which would, in fact, create a new international law. If Israel was not interested in taking up the American initiative, the matter would have to go back to the United Nations, where he doubted that Israel could get any worthwhile guarantees at all.

I told Dulles that I thought he was exaggerating the gap between our positions and that we should both strive to give time for mature and detailed consideration.

In a cable to Jerusalem on February 16 I pointed out that in my appraisal the Dulles *aide-mémoire* was the optimal American position, apart from improvements that might arise in a detailed negotiation. I was certain that the President had given his assent to this approach. Friendly newspapers, congressmen and others were beginning to think that Israel was unreasonable. The only way to avoid a crisis was to accept the document as a basis for detailed negotiation and to avoid generalized rejection.

The Israeli government's vacillation was beginning to irritate the United States. On February 16 Dulles came back to Washington from Georgia and invited me to his home, where I found Phleger; Francis Wilcox, the head of the UN department; and Rountree. Dulles was irascible and impatient. If we did not see any value in the American initiative, the best thing that we could do would be "to try our luck elsewhere." "The President and I know that Israel faces a grave choice," he added, "but we believe that our proposals offer desirable results. The policy of the United States does not flow from transitory considerations. There is a real attempt to create a new pattern of stability in the area. This is a matter of supreme importance. If Israel accepts the American proposal and withdraws from Gaza and Sinai, America and all mankind will owe a great debt to Israel. I believe that the debt will be paid." I asked what the United States would do if, despite everything, Egyptian illegalities were renewed. Dulles replied that he was not a pacifist and that the United States understood the heavy responsibility that it would incur if, after Israel's withdrawal, we were the victims of renewed aggression or blockade.

We were not getting anywhere and the room was thick with tension. I promised to report to Ben Gurion and Golda Meir and added that I expected that my government would invite me home to hear a more detailed description of what had occurred. However, if the

General Assembly were to start talking about sanctions, this would prevent any favorable consideration of the American proposals. I therefore suggested that the United States should postpone the UN session.

I had invented the idea of my return to Israel as a desperate way to postpone the crisis and to rescue the accumulated results of our work over the past four months. I was also convinced that long argumentative cables would not bring about the necessary harmony between Ben Gurion and myself about our attitude to the Dulles proposals.

That evening the State Department published the February 11 memorandum. We were told of a consultation between Eisenhower and Dulles in which the President had shown impatience with Ben Gurion's attitude. The newspaper friendliest to Israel, the New York *Journal-American*, published by the Hearst press, wrote on February 19: "President Eisenhower has placed his tremendous influence and this nation's prestige behind his assurances to Israel. Further than that, he does not feel he should go. Further than that, we do not think he should go."

When I assembled the staffs of the embassy and the UN delegation on February 16, I summed up the position by saying, "I am afraid that our government will not take yes for an answer." It was a peculiarly frustrating moment. It appeared to me that in the zest of waging the conflict, some of our leaders had forgotten what the conflict had been about. Unlike the British and French expeditions, which were imprecise in their goals, the Israeli war aims had been carefully formulated by Ben Gurion before the October 29 operations began. He had two direct objectives: to open a sea route from Eilat to the east and to expel the Egyptian army from Gaza. Corollary objectives included the aim of making the United States react more seriously to the provocations under which we had lived.

It was obvious to me since the February 11 memorandum that all these aims were attainable. We had made a major breakthrough. If we rejected the opportunity of an agreement with the United States, the question would be thrown back into the chaotic and sterile maelstrom of the United Nations. I told Ben Gurion that for Israel, the United Nations was "a beehive without honey." We got all the stings with no compensating advantage. Ben Gurion was refusing to recognize the immensity of his own victory.

Ben Gurion now formally asked me to come home. I went to say farewell to Dulles before my departure on the afternoon of February 17. He was again accompanied by Phleger, Wilcox and Rountree. This meeting was downright unpleasant. I gave Dulles an account of

Ben Gurion's comments on the February 11 memorandum. Dulles interrupted me while he talked to President Eisenhower. When I resumed my analysis, Dulles cut me short by saying that what I had to say was very interesting but "was not of much use since the government of Israel had apparently decided not to accept the American proposal, even in principle." He said that he had done everything possible to put off the UN debate which would spoil every prospect of a solution, but he doubted if he could do any more. He said that he felt we were on "the verge of a catastrophe." The most serious possibility ever achieved of cooperation between Israel and the United States was going to be wasted, and we were going to enter a period of tension between our two countries. He presumed that Ben Gurion had carefully weighed all the dangers inherent in this course, against the bright prospects available from negotiating on the basis of the American memorandum. If so, he was unable to understand how Israel had reached such an eccentric conclusion.

While I was in the air on the way home, Eisenhower made a broadcast to the American people. He took credit for a major effort to allay Israel's concerns. He expressed the fear that if Israel was unreasonable, the United States would "have to adopt measures which might have far-reaching effects on Israel's relations throughout the world." Despite the vigorous nature of this speech, Silver called Shiloah to say that the object of Eisenhower's address was not to close the door but to leave it open, and above all, to gain time for my mission home.

The Administration was now making an interesting attempt to soften the Israeli position by influencing Jewish leaders. Through the Secretary of the Treasury, George Humphrey, a meeting was arranged with a number of Jewish leaders, most of whom would normally be described as "non-Zionist." These included Jacob Blaustein, Irving Engel, Philip Klutznik, Barney Balaban, Bill Rosenwald, Sam Leidersdorf, Mendel Silberberg. The meeting took place on February 21, and to the Administration's astonishment, the leaders of what was regarded as the "assimilated" part of American Jewry spoke defiantly in defense of all Israel's positions.

After a tiring journey I reached Jerusalem and took part in Cabinet sessions throughout February 21 and 22. In talks with me Ben Gurion paid generous tribute to the results of my diplomatic and information efforts over the past four months, and especially to my speech on November 1. I reported my own conclusions to the Cabinet: we had reached the optimal results of our pressure and should now turn from polemics to negotiation. There was at least the prospect of a settlement which would ensure free passage in the Straits of Tiran, prevent a return of the Egyptian army to Gaza, and obligate the United States to make a supreme effort to avoid dangers to Israel's security.

While I was in Jerusalem, Ben Gurion received a personal letter from General Bedell Smith, whom he regarded as Israel's staunchest friend. Bedell Smith, a rough-hewn soldier, with a no-nonsense type of mentality, thin, scholarly and bespectacled, looked less like a general than any general that had ever lived. He now drew fully on the confidence that he enjoyed with Israel's leaders. He wrote to Ben Gurion bluntly that he ought to give "some flexibility to Eban," who was "perfectly capable of reaching a negotiation which would ensure stability for many years."

I found that my presence in Jerusalem had a marked effect on Ben Gurion. The instructions that he gave me now were to aim at a detailed clarification of what each sentence of the February 11 memorandum meant. On February 22 Ben Gurion cabled Eisenhower in reply to the message he had received from Eisenhower late the night before. Ben Gurion stated that the Israeli government had been holding discussions all day with me, and had examined the report that I gave of the views of the American government. He informed Eisenhower that I would leave the next morning with new instructions expressing the considered position of Ben Gurion himself and his colleagues. He concluded by saying that he hoped the United Nations discussions could be put off until Monday in order to enable me to see Dulles before the Assembly convened.

Owing to weather delays, my plane from Israel to New York reached London at an hour when there was no further service to the United States. Since I had to stay in London overnight, I had long conversations with Ambassador Elath and his minister, Shmuel Bendor, but avoided any meeting with British officials. Obsessed by the collusion trauma of the previous October, Secretary Dulles was apparently in a suspicious mood. He instructed the American chargé d'affaires, Walworth Barbour, to keep a close watch and report if I made contact with the British authorities before resuming my onward journey. The British newspapers were giving enormous coverage to my journey, and the atmosphere of tension was thick.

On February 24, in the early morning, I touched down in New York. I reported on my discussion in Jerusalem to Golda Meir and met Arthur Dean in the hope that he would "soften up" Dulles before I reached Washington. In my talks with Golda I was able to solve a mystery that had worried both of us. What exactly was Ben Gurion's long-term position about Israel and the Gaza Strip? When I had discussed this with him in Jerusalem, he reacted with sharp and vocal alarm: "Gaza as a part of Israel could be like a cancer.

In return for a small sliver of territory we would take responsibility for some two hundred and fifty to three hundred thousand Arabs. How can we absorb three hundred thousand Arabs against the will of mankind, while also hoping to receive hundreds of thousands of our own immigrants? Our interest in Gaza is security. To take a small territory with a vast Arab population would be the worst possible exchange." He added that my purpose should be "to find an elegant way for us to avoid any permanent responsibility for the entire population of Gaza." In no circumstances should we accept a proposal that would commit Israel to the absorption of an enormous Arab population that would prejudice the internal cohesion of the state.

When I reached Dulles' home on February 24, weary but full of the zest of challenge, I found the street thronged with newspapermen. I was accompanied by Shiloah. On the American side were Dulles, Under-Secretary Christian Herter, Phleger, Wilcox and Rountree. Dulles said that in response to the Prime Minister's request, the United States had managed to put off any detrimental action in the General Assembly.

I told Dulles that I found the Prime Minister unwilling to get into conflict with the United States. He had been impressed by the American attitude since February 11, and wanted me to reach a conclusion. I would ask for clarification of the American commitment on the Straits of Tiran. We would propose that recognition of our right to free navigation in the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Eilat should not be made conditional on the removal of our civilian administration from Gaza. I would suggest a separation of the two issues. We proposed that as soon as we left Sharm el-Sheikh, the American commitment on free passage should go into effect, leaving the problem of Gaza for later solution.

When I finished my exposition, there was a tense silence which Dulles broke with a statement of relief: "Your attitude is constructive." He asked for a short interval to consult his colleagues. When we resumed twenty minutes later, Dulles repeated that having studied my reply, he felt that the Israeli government had made a sincere effort to find a solution. Several details still remained for clarification, but he was now convinced that when an agreement was reached, we would have no reason to regret our attitude. We then conducted a kind of Socratic inquiry by question and answer so that I could send Ben Gurion a precise account of the assurances that I had obtained. First I asked if U.S. shipping would regularly use the Straits of Tiran for actual trade, including the conveyance of oil to Eilat, when appropriate facilities were constructed. Dulles said yes. I asked if the United States understood "free and innocent passage" to mean passage of all ships of commerce and war, provided their conduct did no injury. Dulles accepted this definition. I asked if the UN Force in the Straits could include naval units. Dulles said that this was reasonable and the UN Secretary-General had the necessary authority. I asked if the United States would recognize an Israeli declaration announcing our intention to protect Israeli ships and their rights against attack. Dulles said that the United States would recognize the right under Article 51 of the UN Charter as an exercise of the "inherent right of self-defense."

In response to other questions Dulles promised to secure the association of other maritime countries with the American policy of free passage in the Straits. He said that if there was an attempt to remove the UN Force, the United States would expect the General Assembly to consider the request before such withdrawal was made. He agreed to my request for a restatement of the U.S. position according to which the UN Force would remain as long as necessary to prevent a blockade. He also consented to my request for a letter by the President to Prime Minister Ben Gurion reiterating American commitments. I reaffirmed the Israeli position on Gaza. Dulles replied that it was hard to imagine Egypt abrogating her rights in Gaza under the 1949 Armistice Agreement, but it was possible for Egypt to acquiesce in the nonexercise of those rights and in their exercise by the UN.

Dulles said that the answers he had given me would be embodied or reflected in the United States speech in the General Assembly.

It had been an exhausting day, and I came out of Dulles' residence with a feeling that we had broken through. I cabled the exchange to Jerusalem.

I noted that two or three items in Dulles' assurances needed the endorsement of Secretary-General Hammarskjöld. Accordingly, I flew to New York for a meeting with him. We conferred for three hours, during which the hopes of an early solution faded minute by minute. Hammarskjöld refused to endorse Dulles' readiness to have a UN navy patrol in the Straits of Tiran. Far more serious was his utter refusal to recognize any legitimate Israeli interest in the future of Gaza, and he handed me a memorandum to this effect. At the end of our discussion Hammarskjöld said that he had no way of holding up the General Assembly meeting beyond February 26.

After my talk with Hammarskjöld I called Dulles urgently on the telephone from New York. I told him that Hammarskjöld was frustrating our agreement. He was not only unhelpful in the Straits of Tiran; he seemed to envisage nothing better for Gaza than a return to the status quo, leaving Israel with no assurance of security. I felt that unless we could separate Gaza from the Straits of Tiran, we might end up with a sterile result on both of them. Dulles replied that he would still like to reach an integral solution of all the problems together.

The next day, February 25, I was back in Washington talking with Dulles, Phleger, Wilcox and Rountree in the early afternoon. Dulles reiterated that it was impossible to separate the Gaza problem from that of the Straits of Tiran. The legal basis for the American commitment on free passage in the Straits was the absence of belligerency in accordance with the Security Council's resolution of September 1, 1951. But if Israel remained in the "illicit" possession of Egyptian territory in Gaza, it could not be said that belligerency had ended. Thus the legal consequences of our military presence in Gaza would spill over into the Straits of Tiran and frustrate the application of the American commitment.

We seemed to be in a deadlock. It was here that Dulles made an unexpected approach. He informed us that the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of France, Guy Mollet and Christian Pineau, were in Washington on an official visit. The French leaders had made a proposal which Eisenhower and Dulles thought might help to solve the deadlock. Dulles suggested that I see Pineau right away; he himself did not feel competent to reveal the content of the proposal, since it was French and not American. But if Israel found the French suggestion "interesting," Eisenhower and Dulles would give it their support.

This was the first time that we had heard of a French initiative to solve the Gaza problem. I immediately went to the French embassy with Shiloah, to be cordially greeted by Pineau, who was accompanied by Ambassador Hervé Alphand. Pineau said that instead of a discursive verbal discussion, he would give me a memorandum in the original French, together with a translation that he had made for Eisenhower. The French memorandum suggested that Israel announce complete withdrawal in accordance with UN resolutions, on the understanding that the initial takeover of Gaza from Israeli military and civilian control would be exclusively by the UN Emergency Force; that the United Nations would be the agency used for civilian administration; that UN administration would continue until a peace settlement; and that if Egypt created conditions of deterioration such as existed previously, "Israel would reserve its freedom to act to defend its rights." The memo went on to suggest that the United States and other states that so decided would approve Israel's declaration.

The new element in Pineau's proposal was the idea that Israel, with American assent, should specifically reserve her right to return to Gaza if her withdrawal was followed by renewed *fedayeen* activities.

Just as the United States had recognized our right of self-defense in relation to the Straits of Tiran, so France was proposing a similar recognition of Israel's right of self-defense in the event that our security in the vicinity of Gaza was violated after withdrawal. Pineau pointed out that another objective that France had in mind was to circumvent the awkward fact that we had no majority in the United Nations. Instead of asking for UN endorsement of our positions, the United States, France and Israel would state their view of the international and legal situation and get the General Assembly to acquiesce passively. Pineau was certain that there would not be a majority to vote against what we were saying. There was even a chance that Egypt, which was getting impatient at Israeli occupation, might keep silent in order to secure our withdrawal.

In my cable to Jerusalem I wrote that there were still some problems of formulation, procedure and law that were obscure but that our government should decide in principle if we were prepared to make common cause with the United States and France to establish a special regime in Gaza based on UN control and without Egyptian forces. I recommended a positive answer.

Most of the literature on the end of the Sinai-Suez campaigns does inadequate justice to the French role in breaking the deadlock. In September 1976 Christian Pineau published his version of this episode with a measure of pride.

As I expected, the French initiative had a decisive effect on the Israeli government's attitude. The instructions that I got back from Ben Gurion enabled me to go forward with the formulation of a settlement based on the U.S. memorandum of February 11 and the new French suggestions. The idea was that the United States, France and others should endorse the Israeli Foreign Minister's speech in the General Assembly in which Mrs. Meir would base our withdrawal on the "assumption" of free passage in the Straits of Tiran; the expectation of the maintenance of a UN force until such time as belligerency ended; and the establishment of UN, not Egyptian, control in the Gaza Strip. Israel would announce that if these "expectations and assumptions" were wrecked by Egyptian aggression, Israel would exercise its right of self-defense and would be supported by the United States, France and other countries.

After my talks with Pineau in the French embassy I worked for many hours with State Department officials to formulate our common understanding. Then an unusual episode in modern diplomacy took place. The speech to be made by the Israeli Foreign Minister in the General Assembly was to be not only concerted but actually drafted in advance with the United States. It was arranged that when we were close to an agreed text, Mrs. Meir would come from New York to join us at a meeting with Dulles.

By the afternoon of February 28 Dulles, Pineau and I had agreed to the text which would be endorsed by Washington and Paris and proclaimed by Israel in the General Assembly.

With regard to the Straits of Tiran, the Israeli speech would reiterate the doctrine of free passage laid down in the February 11 memorandum and would announce "Israel's intention to protect ships of its flag exercising the right of free and innocent passage on the high seas and in international waters." We would go on to state that interference by the use or threat of force with ships under Israeli flag exercising free passage of the Gulf of Aqaba and through the Straits of Tiran "will be regarded by Israel as an attack, entitling her to exercise her inherent right of self-defense under Article 51 of the Charter, and to take all such measures as are necessary to ensure the free passage of her ships in the Gulf and in the Straits." On the Gaza problem Mrs. Meir's speech would be a detailed recital of Pineau's proposal, including the idea that Israel would have a recognized right to defend itself if raids were renewed.

While our discussions were going forward with State Department officials, a message came saying that the Secretary himself would like to join our deliberations. We went down to his room and proceeded with the drafting process. Dulles himself suggested certain changes:

1. Whereas our text spoke of "complete withdrawal" from Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza, the Secretary suggested "complete and prompt withdrawal."
2. Whereas I had written that interference "by the use or threat of force" would justify Israeli reaction, Dulles insisted on a more cautious phrase. He would agree to say that we should be entitled to react only if there was actual "interference by armed force," and not merely a "threat."
3. Instead of saying that the UN force would remain in position in Gaza "until a peace agreement was reached," Dulles insisted on adding the phrase "or a definitive arrangement on the future of the Gaza Strip."

At this stage Dulles told us that Lodge would be instructed to give American endorsement to the agreed text of Mrs. Meir's speech. I asked if we could see or hear exactly what Lodge would say. According to Dulles, they were only now beginning to draft Lodge's declaration, but he assured us that it would include all the agreements that we had reached with him. When Mrs. Meir joined us to work on the final draft of her impending speech, the understandings we reached became an American-Israeli contract in every real sense.

Before February 28 was out, Dulles and Wilcox had met with the ambassadors of Britain and Canada, as well as representatives of the French embassy. Dulles read out the Israeli declaration and received assurances that France, Canada and Britain would almost certainly give their support.

We had now completed the negotiations. Mrs. Meir had given her assent to the text and gone back to New York. Before leaving for the United Nations meeting on March 1, I asked Dulles for a private meeting. I wanted to stress the importance of making sure that there would be no Egyptian return to Gaza. I still felt uneasy that there was some ambivalence on this point. Dulles invited me to his home that night and we spoke for forty minutes, alone.

I said that our decision to cooperate with Pineau's plan was based on the assumption that there would be no Egyptian return to Gaza in any form, directly or indirectly. For us this was a fundamental and central consideration. It was, therefore, disquieting that the implementation would depend on Hammarskjöld. It was important that I should hear that very evening what exactly the American attitude was on this problem.

Dulles got up from his chair and spoke without interruption for twenty minutes. As he walked up and down the room he said that he welcomed this unofficial opportunity to talk to me frankly. "I assume that you know what a big political victory Israel is getting today," he went on. "The opening of the Gulf of Eilat as an international waterway is ensured with almost a hundred percent of certainty. In Gaza, the era of exclusive Egyptian control is over, and from now on the effective control will be with the United Nations. This also is an important gain for you. In addition, you are gaining something no less important—the strengthening of friendship between America and Israel. The Arabs have a completely accurate appraisal of the situation and they are not attempting to disguise their disappointment. They don't really want you to evacuate Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza at all. Their real desire is that you continue to occupy those places and become weakened and isolated, and especially that you lose your support in the United States. Your cooperation with the United States and France will strengthen Israel's international position beyond recognition. As for Gaza, the American attitude is clear. We want an international regime without Egypt there at all. Egypt has no good reason to return to Gaza which was never a part of sovereign Egyptian territory. The scheme which we have worked out with Mollet and Pineau is designed to prevent Egyptian return to Gaza, both military or political. But the United States is not omnipotent, even though there is an illusion in the world that it is enough for us to want something for that thing to happen. We are, however, not without influence. You can tell your government that the United States will do its utmost to ensure that Egypt does not come back to Gaza." He paused and went on, "I cannot guarantee full success. I can only guarantee a supreme effort to ensure this objective." He added, "What I am telling you is also the view of the French ministers. You don't have better friends than them and us." Then, with some emotion: "I have never concealed from you that your choice is difficult, but when I compare the arrangement that we've agreed upon today with the position that you would find yourself in by remaining in those two places against world opinion, I'm quite unable to imagine how the balance could be portrayed as anything but favorable." He ended by promising to talk to Hammarskjöld and Pineau.

On the morning of March 1, in an atmosphere of tension, Mrs. Meir went up to the UN rostrum to make an address containing the following passages:

> *Israel is resolved on behalf of vessels of Israel registry to exercise the right of free and innocent passage and is prepared to join with others to secure universal respect of this right.*
>
> *Israel will protect ships of its own flag exercising the right of free and innocent passage on the high seas and in international waters. Interference, by armed force, with ships of Israel flag exercising free and innocent passage in the Gulf of Aqaba and through the Straits of Tiran, will be regarded by Israel as an attack entitling it to exercise its inherent right of self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter and to take all such measures as are necessary to ensure the free and innocent passage of its ships in the Gulf and in the Straits . . .*
>
> *. . . It is the position of Israel that if conditions are created in the Gaza Strip which indicate a return to the conditions of deterioration which existed previously, Israel would reserve its freedom to act to defend its rights.*

Mrs. Meir was succeeded at the rostrum by Henry Cabot Lodge. Throughout the morning we had made vain efforts to get a copy of the speech that Lodge intended to make. He had replied that the formulation was still not complete. When he made his speech it became apparent that this evasion had not been accidental. In discussing the issue of the Gulf of Aqaba, his statements were entirely satisfactory. But when he came to Gaza, there were serious deviations from the original Pineau-Dulles text. In the first place, he made a specific reference to the armistice agreement, which gave Egypt jurisdiction in Gaza. Our understanding with Dulles was that nothing would be said about the armistice agreement. The effect of this was to emphasize Egypt's juridical position in the Gaza area instead of leaving the question unresolved.

The speech by the French delegate, Georges Picot, was very strong. France made it plain that if Israel were to suffer Egyptian encroachments at Gaza or the Straits of Tiran, it would be fully entitled to use its right of self-defense. The British speech was satisfactory, as were those of other maritime countries. The Egyptian delegates sat silent.

On leaving the Assembly Hall, I called Dulles on the phone to complain bitterly about Lodge's references to Gaza. When I reached the hotel, I found an urgent invitation from Dulles to come and see him the next day, March 2, at home. I called him again and continued to express my surprise and indignation. Dulles said that he thought things had gone well during the day, but that if I was anxious, he was anxious because of my anxiety. He added that I ought to know that the Arab world was up in arms about the American-French-Israeli agreement. He implored me to ascertain that we would carry out our undertaking on withdrawal and get into immediate talk with General Burns, if possible by Sunday. The United States would be vigilant to ensure that what we had agreed upon would be carried out.

That afternoon Golda Meir, Emile Najar and I had a talk with Mollet and Pineau, who were accompanied by Alphand and Picot. Pineau thought that things had gone rather well in the General Assembly. On the Straits of Tiran, Lodge's speech was perfectly in order, and Pineau thought that the deviations about Gaza were merely "nuances." But he agreed that Alphand should go back to Washington the next day and strengthen my efforts to get Dulles to make a statement which would restore the situation to what it had been before Lodge's speech.

Later that day Pineau asked me for a personal talk. He said with great emotion that he hoped that we would continue on the path that we had begun. The important things were not parliamentary formulations or United Nations texts, but "reality." The reality was that France and the United States had agreed to ensure free passage in the Straits and to attempt to establish international control in Gaza. As a professional politician, he understood that we had internal problems. His advice was that we should present the situation in its true light as an important political victory. He urged us to announce by

Monday that we had begun to withdraw and that there should be common efforts by France and Israel in Washington to make certain that the United States kept its word.

The next morning, March 2, I was awakened by a telephone call from Jerusalem. Ben Gurion was on the line in great agitation. He asked me to make it clear that the changes that Lodge had introduced had caused confusion in Israel. The Cabinet would meet the next day to decide its attitude to withdrawal. I was asked to demand:

1. A clear American statement on UN control in Gaza with no Egyptian presence.
2. Recognition of Israel's right of self-defense in relation to the Straits and Gaza Strip.
3. An American undertaking not to press us to accept Hammarskjöld's proposal that in order for the UN force to be stationed in Gaza, there should be a symbolic UN presence on the Israeli side of the armistice line.

I was asked to lay special stress on the first two points. In an addendum from Yaacov Herzog, it was stated that if there was no response from the Secretary, I ought to hint to him or somebody else in the State Department that if the whole withdrawal plan exploded, we would have no choice but to publish the fact that we had been led astray by the American speech at the UN.

On that Sabbath afternoon, Shiloah and I spoke with Dulles and his advisers at his home. Dulles made no attempt to explain Lodge's speech, but he stated that American endorsement of Mrs. Meir's address was intact and complete. Dulles said that he was prepared to write a letter to Ben Gurion, giving strong assurances of American support of Israel's position in relation to the Straits of Tiran and the Gaza Strip. If I liked, he would publish the letter that very night. I replied, with as much delicacy as possible, that if it was intended to make an impression on Ben Gurion and the Israeli Cabinet, might it not be better for the President's authority to be invoked? Dulles and his advisers went out of the room for thirty minutes, leaving Shiloah and myself in exclusive possession of an excellent bottle of French cognac that had been presented to Dulles by Guy Mollet. I do no offense to Reuven Shiloah's memory if I record that his depredations on that bottle were more far-reaching than mine. When Dulles came back, he showed me the draft of a letter to be written by Eisenhower to Ben Gurion, strongly committing the United States to support Israel's rights in the Strait of Tiran and to be free from attack from Gaza.

At that moment the President did not know what we had "decided" that he should say. Dulles picked up the telephone in our presence and spoke to James Hagerty, the President's press secretary, who was with Eisenhower on his yacht on the Potomac. We had a bad connection, and I could hear the lapping waves through the receiver. Dulles said that it was essential to help Prime Minister Ben Gurion, who had made a difficult decision. It was vital that the President give him a letter in full support. Hagerty apparently said that he would get Eisenhower's assent as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, news came from Israel about our hesitations concerning withdrawal. This set off a spate of articles in the American press, urging Israel to carry out its undertaking. Most newspapers thought that the engagements of the American and French governments at the highest level were far more important than the precise text of Lodge's speech. Silver called me to praise Mrs. Meir's speech and to urge us not to reach any extreme conclusions as a result of Lodge's formulation.

The two French leaders had now reached Canada on an official visit. Alphand called me from his embassy to say on behalf of Pineau that with all the difficulties involved, the French leaders nevertheless strongly urged us not to create a crisis or to hold up our withdrawal because of Lodge's speech. "France is not going to press you in any way and the decision must remain in your hands."

When I told him about Eisenhower's letter to Ben Gurion, Alphand said that the French would be surprised. They never believed that it was possible to obtain such a declaration with the President's full authority. He then gave me the copy of a message that Pineau had sent to Dulles from Ottawa on March 3. This message outlined the French understanding of the situation resulting from the deliberations in the UN. The result, in the French view, would be that the UN would assume "the exclusive responsibility of the civil and military administration of Gaza until the conclusion of a peace treaty or of a definitive settlement of that area." In the event that the UN abandoned its responsibility in whole or part to Egypt, Israel would have the right to apply the safeguard clauses under Mrs. Meir's declaration.

The next day, March 4, Pineau sent a message to Ben Gurion through the French embassy in Washington with a copy to me describing the message that he had sent to Dulles.

When I added these French assurances on Gaza to the undertaking given by Eisenhower about the Straits of Tiran, the picture was clear. The two friendliest powers to Israel had not promised to fight for us if we were again blockaded or threatened by violence and terrorism, but they had certainly undertaken to support Israel if we took our own armed action to prevent a return to belligerent policies against us in Gaza or the Straits. We shall see in a later chapter what happened to these promises ten years later.

I attached importance to Eisenhower's letter and to the French assurances. In a long cable to Ben Gurion I advised him to make the most of these commitments. To my relief, I received a reply stating that in the light of my talk with Dulles, and especially Eisenhower's letter, the Prime Minister intended to accept the arrangement. Ben Gurion hoped that I might still try to get Dulles to make clearer undertakings of American support for Israel if I used our right of self-defense against provocations from Gaza. I sought out Dulles again. As I had expected, he was unwilling to go beyond the President's letter in writing. He felt quite certain that we had reduced our risks to the minimum. All he could suggest was that we meet a year from now and see who was right and who was wrong. Would there be free passage in the Gulf of Aqaba and the Straits of Tiran? Would there be a full year of peace behind us on the Gaza boundary? He was absolutely convinced that the answer would be yes, and that this would be the case for the following years as well.

Later that day the news came from Israel that we were carrying out our undertaking of withdrawal on the basis of Mrs. Meir's speech, which had been endorsed by the United States, France and others.

Seldom if ever have I spent weeks as exhausting as those which I lived between the end of October and the conclusion of our agreements with the United States and France. Taking advantage of the hospitality of friends in Florida, I went with Suzy and our two children to Palm Beach. After a couple of days of repose and diversion, I was awakened on March 11 with the news that the Egyptian government had announced its intention to resume its administration of the Gaza Strip. This was a violation not only of what we had been led to expect from the United States and France, but even of Hammarskjöld's statement that any attempt to interfere with the UN forces would first be discussed with the Advisory Committee, made up of states contributing contingents to the UN force. I went back to Washington for talks on March 13. I handed Acting Secretary of State Christian Herter a letter of protest from Ben Gurion that hinted at the possibility of Israeli action to prevent the Egyptian army from following the Egyptian administrators back to Gaza.

The return of the Egyptian administration to the Gaza Strip even without the Egyptian army shook Israel's faith in the stability of the settlement we had so laboriously reached. While the United States shared our disappointment, it still did not believe that the agreed arrangements had totally collapsed. When Mrs. Meir came to Washington on March 17 to express our concern to Secretary Dulles, he received her with courtesy. His attitude was that Nasser's reputation for unreliability was further enhanced. On the other hand, Dulles advised Mrs. Meir and me to regard the absence of the Egyptian army and the presence of the UN forces in Gaza as a radical change in our security situation. Similar advice came from the French government, which had taken the major responsibility for the Gaza paragraph of the settlement. Washington and Paris both predicted that Israel had achieved her major aim. After all, what did it matter if a UN or an Egyptian governor was in Gaza so long as the Egyptian army was removed from our throat and *fedayeen* operations were arrested through the presence of a UN force?

The optimistic prediction was, for once, destined to be fulfilled. Between March 1957 and May 1967, not a single episode of armed attack took place against Israel from the Gaza Strip.

With the final withdrawal of Israeli forces on March 19, the Sinai Campaign had come to an end. In a comprehensive article summarizing the campaign in his book *Netzach Yisrael,* Ben Gurion paid generous tribute to the work of the two missions over which I presided:

> *The great work accomplished by our Embassy in Washington and our delegation in the United Nations made a strong impression on American public opinion. The press, Congressional circles and intellectuals showed deep understanding of Israel's attitude and of the justice of her struggle. It was the result of pressure of public opinion that brought about a change in American opinion, leading to the final stage of our struggle on February 11, 1957 and thereafter.*

The next three years, 1956 to 1959, were to be as rewarding as the two years before the Sinai Campaign had been frustrating. The Eisenhower Administration made every effort to honor the President's prediction that Israel would not regret its action. During April 1957 I worked with Dulles and Herter to bring about a symbolic expression of our political victory. I wanted the first flag to pass through the Straits of Tiran to be that of the United States, both in order to commit the United States concretely to its doctrine of free passage, and also because I thought it less likely that Egypt would obstruct an American vessel than any other. On April 24 when the S.S. *Kernhills,* with many thousands of tons of crude oil, docked in Eilat, having passed under the gaze of the UN forces, the celebration in Israel was heartfelt and sincere.

All the aims that Ben Gurion had formulated for the Sinai Campaign on October 28 had been fulfilled. We had broken the blockade of our southern approaches. We had achieved peace in the areas surrounding the Gaza Strip. We had made the United States more careful and vigilant about Israel's moods and fears, and despite dark forebodings about "isolation," Israel's international relations were to flourish and expand.

9

End of a Mission: First Steps in Politics 1957-1960

THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE SINCE OCTOBER 1956 HAD BEEN GLADIATORIAL AND dramatic, and it had been conducted in full public view. My face and voice were now known to cabdrivers, bellhops, shopkeepers and passers-by, as well as to the diplomatic community in which I worked. This was not the usual fate of ambassadors, most of whom passed without notice in the streets of Washington and New York. The inconvenient loss of privacy was offset by the advantage of wide resonance. I was also able, unexpectedly, to begin my publishing career. Sam Raeburn of Horizon Press came to see me on the morrow of my General Assembly address on November 1, 1956, to propose that I publish my principal speeches. I was doubtful about this, since few volumes of speeches have ever achieved much success. The spoken and the written words are not usually of the same idiom and cadence. But I acceded to Raeburn's plea, and was rewarded by a sale of many tens of thousands of copies.

One day I received a telephone call from a friend in a New York publishing office recommending that I swear never to publish a book again. I was taken aback by what seemed churlish counsel, but my friend pointed out that he had just read two reviews of *Voice of Israel* which were so rhapsodic that I ought to leave the record as it stood in case the critics changed their mind. Henry Steele Commager, the Columbia University historian, had written: "As Ben Gurion has been the spirit of Israel, so Abba Eban has been its voice. It is a voice of rare eloquence: indeed now that Churchill and De Gaulle are off the stage, Eban's voice is the most eloquent of all the leading actors." A few weeks later, the *Times Literary Supplement* in London, usually sparing in praise, compared me to Cicero and Burke! It was not necessary to take all these eulogies at full value in order to be humanly encouraged. They certainly did no harm to my capacity to fulfill my diplomatic functions.

The pace of my work now became less hectic. There was room for occasional periods of repose in the company of friends. We would sometimes go for long weekends to the home of Rebecca Shulman in Stamford, Connecticut. She is the widow of an eminent corporation lawyer, Herman Shulman, who had built an exquisite collection of modern art. The combination of warm friendship, rural peace, esthetic beauty and a burning devotion to Israel made Rebecca Shulman's environment magnetic for us. In the heat of summer we found seclusion in Martha's Vineyard. Throughout the year we were sustained by the friendship of Dewey and Anne Stone of Brockton, Massachusetts. Dewey's fierce energies were at work on behalf of the Weizmann Institute, the United Jewish Appeal and every cause that had anything to do with Israel's security and Jewish honor. Standing with him in loyalty to the same causes were Harry and Lee Levine of Cambridge, Massachusetts, who were also among the heirs of Weizmann's legacy.

Washington had its particular social round, in which some degree of participation was ritually necessary. I fear that I sometimes carried out this part of my duties with minimal grace. I have no taste whatever for cocktail parties, which I regard as an advanced form of man's inhumanity to man. At dinner parties I was often handicapped by a distaste for conventional small talk with Cabinet and Congress wives, some of whom may have found me too direct. When a hostess said gushingly and at enormous length that she liked the flowers I had sent her but "I really should not have troubled," I replied after the fourth repetition, "Yes, I agree. I suppose it was not really necessary."

I enjoyed the intellectual and fraternal challenge of my speeches to Jewish audiences, but am unable to this day to endure the accompanying "ritual" without symptoms of impatience. The reception at five-thirty, the laborious arrangement of dais speakers, the invocations and benedictions in which rabbis carry out an emotional campaign of attrition against the Creator, the soggy chicken, and the panegyrics extolling preceding speakers—all this used to leave me exhausted and drained before I could get near the podium to make my address. I have often wondered if there is not a less tormenting method of mobilizing sympathy and resources for Israel. But the ardor of Jews in support of Israel is so profound that any effort to nourish it is worthwhile.

By the end of March 1957 Eisenhower had persuaded the Congress to ratify his "doctrine" under which the United States would aid any country in the Middle East threatened by "international Communism." This was not a relevant security guarantee to Israel. The threat to us came not from "international Communism" but from Arab states of varying orientation. Yet we could not forget that the Soviet Union had recently intimidated us with violent menace; this might happen again. And it was not inconceivable that an Arab state contiguous to Israel might one day qualify for description as part of the "international Communist system." Thus, while official Israeli opinion was divided on the question whether Israel should seek inclusion in the Eisenhower Doctrine, I had no doubt that our course was clear. It would be politically and psychologically quixotic for the United States to have a more intimate commitment to other Middle Eastern states than to Israel. Had we not spent many years complaining about the discrimination by which the West excluded us from their arms treaties and their plans for defense organization? It would be absurd for us to be willingly left out even of a demonstrative American policy that might never come to fruition.

Therefore, when the Eisenhower Administration empowered James P. Richards, a former chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, to tour Middle Eastern countries and obtain statements of adherence to the Eisenhower Doctrine, I supported Ben Gurion against those of his colleagues who suggested that we reject the invitation. I thought it particularly inconsistent that ministers who had shown alarm at the prospect of a Soviet attack should now be so cavalier in rejecting American deterrence of such an assault.

Indeed, we were soon to be reminded that the Middle Eastern conflict had a global dimension. In August 1957 Syria took a sharp turn toward the left. An officer of Communist sympathies was appointed as Chief of Staff, and American diplomats were expelled from Damascus. The United States responded by sending arms to Lebanon and Jordan, which were Syria's rivals and potential victims. Washington also encouraged Turkey to concentrate her troops on the Syrian border. The Soviet Union announced that it would "not be indifferent to what goes on in the Middle East," and began to treat Turkey to the kind of intimidatory notes that London, Paris and Jerusalem had received in 1956. The crisis petered out by the end of 1957, but one of its results was to strengthen the solidarity between Egypt and Syria, and to confirm the Syrian government in its view that it had something to fear from Western hostility. Thus, in February 1958, Egypt and Syria announced their merger in the framework of the "United Arab Republic." Nasser's prestige had reached its climax. The Syrian-Egyptian coalition set off protective reactions in the conservative Arab states. Jordan and Iraq announced a "federation," and when Nasserist elements attempted to overthrow the pro-Western Lebanese government headed by Camille Chamoun, the United States took measures that seemed quixotically in contradiction to its posture of supporting Nasser in 1956. It strengthened Lebanon with arms and ordered naval concentrations off Beirut.

When a revolution broke out in Iraq on July 14, 1958, sweeping away the Hashemite monarchy and the pro-Western Prime Minister Nuri Said, the United States decided on a drastic revision of its Middle Eastern policy. First, Washington and London agreed to diagnose the revolution in Iraq as a success for Nasser. It was soon to emerge that the new Iraqi rulers, led by Brigadier General Abdul Karim Kassem, were as hostile to Nasser as it was possible to be. When the Lebanese government, through Camille Chamoun and Charles Malik, requested American military intervention, the United States acceded. Marines landed in Beirut while British paratroops arrived simultaneously in Jordan in response to an appeal from King Hussein.

Throughout this crisis the United States kept in close and intimate touch with us. Together with Yaacov Herzog, my new minister at the embassy, I was closeted with Dulles several times a week. Israeli acquiescence was needed for British paratroopers to overfly our territory on their way to Jordan. Beyond this, the United States required Israel's influence on Capitol Hill in support of its intervention. A special session of the UN General Assembly was called in which we witnessed the unique spectacle of Arab regimes attacking one another, while their common hostility to Israel was relegated to a minor place. In the end the Arab League pretended to achieve a reconciliation which enabled the General Assembly to disperse and American and British troops to leave Lebanon and Jordan after a stay of less than six months.

In talks with me, Dulles made tormented attempts to prove that there was no contradiction between American support of Nasser in 1956 and American military action against him in 1958. The rationalization was that in 1956 Nasser had been the victim of armed assault, whereas in 1958 he was the architect of threats, intimidations and acts of violence. In August 1958 Dulles sent me a memorandum pointing out that it was one thing to support "Arab nationalism," but quite another to endorse "radical Arab nationalism," which took the form of an attempt by one Arab country to impose its system of government and ideology by force or subversion on others. In the United Nations General Assembly, Eisenhower and Dulles attempted without much success to secure condemnation of what they called "indirect aggression," by which they meant attempts to achieve changes by subversion and infiltration rather than through the overt crossing of boundaries by armed forces.

Together with the crucial opening of the oil route through Eilat by an American tanker, the United States symbolized its new benevolence by economic aid and by support of our water development. There was also a habit of a close consultation, the intimacy of which had deepened as a result of my contacts with Dulles in the months of 1956 and 1957. The United States was obviously coming to regard Israel not as a burden to be chivalrously sustained, but as an asset in the global and ideological balance.

One day in August 1958 I went to see Dulles with a letter from Ben Gurion inviting American attention to our efforts to strengthen Israel's links with the developing countries of Asia and Africa. Ben Gurion reached a high level of eloquence in describing Israel's role in this human drama. Dulles told me that the President and he were astonished by the scope of this Israeli effort. The newly emerging societies were in desperate need of training in various aspects of the development process. On the other hand, they were suspicious both of the European countries with their colonial tradition, and of the United States, whose immense power gave small states a sense of inferiority. Israel had no history in Africa or East Asia, and was not suspected of imperialist capacity or intention. It might, therefore, be able to fill a gap. We did not seek any direct American assistance for our work in the developing countries, but I invoked it as an additional argument in favor of strengthening Israel's economy. After all, we would not be very effective as a teacher of accelerated development to other nations if our own economy and society did not show signs of progress.

A sense of common purpose now caused the Eisenhower Administration to seek other ways of emphasizing its harmony with Israel. There was also a desire to block Soviet penetration with the support of the Nasser regime. Together with his memorandum against "Arab radicalism" Dulles sent me a note pointing out that the action taken by President Eisenhower to defend Lebanon's independence should be taken as an example of what the United States would do if Israel's survival were really threatened. I myself had some reservations about the parallelism between the two cases; Lebanon had, after all, not been the victim of an external international aggression. I nevertheless hinted that if there was to be an attempt to build a stronger American commitment to Israel, a presidential signature would be valuable. The result was a note from Eisenhower to Ben Gurion asking him to regard the defense of Lebanese independence as symbolic of the seriousness with which the United States took its international obligations.

John Foster Dulles was now pursuing the last stages of his unusual career in the throes of cancer, against which he was battling bravely, but in vain. Early in 1959 it became obvious that the illness was terminal. Toward the end of his stewardship at the State Department, he was recommending heavy economic aid for Israel, encouraging the strengthening of our forces with a modest but symbolically important American component, and praising our role in the developing countries. He was also taking counsel with us in militant resistance to the hegemonistic policies of Nasser. In May 1958, on the tenth anniversary of our independence, he came to my residence at Juniper Street for a dinner celebration, attended also by Senators Stuart Symington and Jacob Javits, and George Meany, the labor leader, as well as Senator William Knowland, the Republican Senate Leader, and Justice Felix Frankfurter. One of the guests remarked that Israel had a special capacity for bringing political and personal rivals around a friendly table. Though this was an exaggeration, it is true that, at that time, the tension between Knowland and Meany was especially virulent. Dulles made a graceful and moving after-dinner speech in which he managed to describe Israel's spiritual origins and explain the special place that Israel occupied in the hearts of the American people.

Dulles had been somewhat of an ogre for Israelis during most of his six years in office. By the time he retired he was regarded by Ben Gurion and others as a friend. Golda Meir has recorded that "at the end he was very helpful. As time went on he saw that Israel's case had merit. This was due mainly to Eban's influence."

The truth is that I tried to help Dulles not only toward an understanding of Israel but also toward a deeper conception of the Arab world. Nasserism had become something more than a doctrine of Egyptian revolution. Its central theme was hegemonistic. Cairo saw itself not only as the capital of Egypt but also as the center in which all Arab policies should be determined. Nasser's policy was "One empire, one nation, one leader," and there was no difficulty in diagnosing who he thought the leader should be. Whenever there was a government in the Arab world dedicated to traditional Moslem values or to cordial relations to the West, Nasser and his agents would move for its overthrow. In a strictly political sense, Nasser was the foe of all the aims that the United States and Israel upheld. Many Arab countries at different times saw his domination as a violation of their own sovereign rights.

In 1959 I published a book called *The Tide of Nationalism,* in which I portrayed the tension in Arab history between pan-Arabism and particularism. In this book I pointed out that there is a trend toward community of purpose among all peoples of Arab speech, but there is also a desire of separate Arab regions to avoid being dominated by a single Arab capital or to break away from that domination once it is imposed.

By the end of 1958 I had spent the best part of a decade in Israel's service abroad. I had at least three reasons for wanting to end my mission. First, I was afraid that despite my frequent journeys home, I would soon lack an intimate relationship with the reality that I was supposed to represent. On the personal level, it was important that Eli and Gila, now aged eight and four, should be immersed in a Hebrew atmosphere and integrated into the Israeli educational system. Finally, I was growing tired of being Israel's "voice," charged to give utterance to policies determined by others. I had strong views of what our policies should be, and not only about how they should be formulated. I thought that this was the time to enter the parliamentary arena back home.

News was coming of rumblings and tensions within the Labor Party (Mapai). The veteran leaders under Ben Gurion—Eshkol, Sapir, Golda Meir, as well as Pinchas Lavon, now eminently installed as Secretary-General of the Histadrut—felt threatened by Ben Gurion's determination to introduce new blood into the party and national leadership. At a party gathering at Kfar Hayarok, Golda had even spoken of resigning. Ben Gurion's main intention was to bring Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres, Director of the Defense Ministry, into the governmental structure at high levels. Yet there was also concern at what seemed to be the rising support for the conservative Likud Party under Menachem Begin, who was developing expansionist concepts together with a populist image. He was benefiting from the social protest in the slum quarters of large towns such as the Hatikvah Quarter in Tel Aviv and Wadi Salib in Haifa. Ben Gurion felt that his present team lacked drawing power. If the Mapai Party wanted to maintain its leading position, it had to open its leadership ranks. At that time the other labor parties, Achdut Ha'avodah and Mapam, were in opposition to Mapai, and could not even be counted upon for loyal cooperation in a coalition. It was essential that Mapai's strength be not only maintained but, if possible, enhanced.

Ben Gurion proposed that sometime before the election in 1959 I come back to Israel to campaign for membership in the Knesset. He said that he would advocate my having a high place on our party list, and that if he formed the next government, I would be a member of it. He was vague about what he expected me to do in his Cabinet but he did say, "You have an unexampled experience in international affairs. That is the subject with which you should be dealing in the government." Giora Josephtal, who was then the secretary-general of our party, made the point of coming to see me at my father-in-law's home in Herzliya to confirm this understanding.

The decision was made easier for me as a result of an episode that had taken place in April of that year. I had been the main speaker, together with UN Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, at the annual dinner of the American-Israel Cultural Foundation. Avoiding the familiar political themes, I had reflected on the challenges facing Israel in the realm of the mind and the spirit. I have always found it hard to build a convincing picture of Israel without a degree of intellectual romanticism. When it comes to territories, populations, oil resources, money, multiplicity of state and all the other ingredients of geopolitical strength, Israel looks puny compared to its neighbors. The question is whether by intellectual vitality and scientific dynamism she can build a compensating strength. Throughout the generations, the Jews have taken with them a great deal of history but very little geography—a vast amount of intellectual and spiritual effort with very few material assets.

When I left the platform after expounding this theme Meyer Weisgal, who was sitting up front, every hair on his head bristling with aggressive expectation, took me in head-on assault. He said in a voice that managed to combine a whisper and a scream, "Magnificent! You've got to be president of the Weizmann Institute." It was unexpected to hear this accolade conferred suddenly at eleven o'clock at night. But Meyer Weisgal, like other hurricanes, does not act in precise accordance with forecasts. We went on to our hotel suite and pursued the matter further. At first the idea seemed far-fetched, but as we explored its implications, it became increasingly attractive. Since Weizmann's death at the end of 1952, no president of the Institute had been appointed. The time had come when this deference would have to be put aside in the Institute's interest. The next president, whether a scientist or not, should try to give enlargement to Weizmann's legacy, to arrange the Institute's relations with the outside world, and of course, to let his name and efforts be used on behalf of the budget.

I made it clear to Weisgal that while I cherished the idea that I would contribute to the Weizmann cause, I was innocent and young enough to aspire to an active political role, and I told him of my discussions with Ben Gurion and Josephtal. He made it clear that he would not expect me to act in an executive capacity. (I reflected silently that anyone who tried to do this would become shriveled up in Weisgal's own magnetic field.)

Thus in November 1958 I went to Rehovot as the president designate of the Weizmann Institute to address the annual Weizmann memorial meeting held in the Plaza. In my audience, comprising many thousands in the fragrant coolness of a Rehovot evening, were Ben Gurion, Eshkol, Golda Meir, Yigael Yadin, most members of the Israeli government, and almost the entire intellectual community. It was one of the occasions on which it seemed important for a speaker to succeed. Since no Israeli mind can work for more than five minutes without a politial thought, the tongues were soon wagging about what my impending return to Israel meant. The press speculated on whether the oratorical qualities that I had displayed that night were really meant to be confined to the campus alone.

The guiding spirit of the Weizmann Institute, after Meyer Weisgal, was my closest friend, Dewey D. Stone. With Dewey, his wife, Anne, and Meyer, Suzy and I inspected the modest but comfortable house on the Institute's grounds, to which we would come to live on the conclusion of my mission in May 1959. A deep serenity seemed to await me here compared with the hectic pace at which we had lived for the past decade and more.

On February 2, 1959, back in Washington, I authorized an announcement on my decision to resign from the posts of ambassador to the United States and the United Nations. Although I had been in office for over a decade in the United Nations and for over eight years in Washington, this declaration was treated as a revolutionary surprise. The Jewish organizations, the Washington diplomatic corps, the American-Israeli Society and delegations at the United Nations prepared a festive farewell. What followed was all very much like an electoral campaign, crisscrossing the country in a constant surge of celebration. A National Testimonial Committee was established, headed by Vice-President Richard Nixon, Chief Justice Earl Warren, ex-Presidents Harry Truman and Herbert Hoover, the future Presidents Senators John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, Adlai Stevenson and a host of governors, senators, congressmen, judges and leaders of the intellectual community. It had been an eventful decade in my life and I was humanly pleased that I may have left some "footprints on the sands of time."

The *New York Times* and the Washington *Post* published editorials of appreciation. But what moved me even more deeply was to receive press clippings of similar tribute from newspapers across the country such as the *Daily Tribune* of Royal Oak, Michigan; the *Mining Journal* of Marquette, Michigan; the *Press* of Middletown, Connecticut; and the *Press* of Sheboygan, Wisconsin. I doubt that the mayor of San Antonio, Texas, knew the name of any other ambassador in Washington, and yet the *Light of San Antonio* published a moving editorial bidding me farewell. In the Chicago Opera House an audience of six thousand heard Senator Paul Douglas and other Illinoisans express their friendship. Douglas said that he wished I were the Democratic presidential candidate. (The next morning Adlai Stevenson called on me and expressed surprise that an "ostensibly intelligent person would want to resign as an ambassador to become a politician and enter an electoral combat." He seemed to be speaking out of the pain and grief of his own experience.) And so on to Louisville, Philadelphia, Rochester, New York, St. Louis, Tuscon, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami and finally to New York, where the ambassadors of fifty nations bade me farewell with Governor Thomas Dewey, Secretary-General U Thant and Eleanor Roosevelt among the speakers. It was, of course, Mrs. Roosevelt who said what was in my heart when she ended her tribute: "It must be wonderful to be young today and to have your ability and already so much experience and now to have a new opportunity to serve a country which, so small, has had an impact on so many nations."

The next evening I said goodbye to American Jewry officially at a mass meeting with eighteen thousand people in Madison Square Garden under the chairmanship of Rabbi Hillel Silver. Yigael Yadin, who was on a visit to the United States, had been asked by Ben Gurion to read his letter to me:

> *As the Representative of a young and small country, you were sent to the capital of the greatest power in the new world. You immediately evoked a rare degree of attention and respect from the leaders, representatives and thinkers of that country. With skill and a unique grace of exposition you won the hearts of your listeners in all regions and among all groups in America. Your appearances in the General Assembly and Security Council of the United Nations brought honor to your country and pride to all your people. Our international situation continues to improve and you have no small part in that achievement. I am, however, confident that the destiny of Israel with which the historic mission of the Jewish people is intertwined will be determined primarily by what is done in Israel. It is in that spirit that I welcome you home.*

In the meantime I was packing my belongings, books, souvenirs and mementos. Somebody in the embassy figured out that during my decade I had visited forty-two of the forty-eight states, had traveled two million miles and had fulfilled more than a thousand engagements at radio and television stations, luncheons, banquets and rallies, as well as hundreds of meetings of the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly. In one of my farewell speeches I said that I had found it easier to live my decade in the United States than to celebrate it.

When all the celebrations came to an end, Suzy and I suddenly found ourselves at Washington's International Airport, with Yaacov Herzog and the embassy staff seeing us off. We had every reason to be exhilarated by what had gone before and what awaited us in the future. Yet, the methodical liquidation of ten years of our life suddenly struck a sharp blow to our consciousness—and Suzy was very close to tears.

There is a conventional envy of diplomats for the intensity of their experience and the amenities by which they are surrounded. There would be less jealousy if more account were taken of the sacrifice inherent in the constant rootlessness. It is a nomadic destiny with countless reunions and partings and abrupt sunderings of relationships that stretch deep into the habit and the affections. I have known many foreign service officers in Israel and other countries who have never managed to restore emotional stability when, after being "in orbit" through so many different planets of experience, they suddenly return to the hard earth of normality. Their wives and children suffer even more intensely, without the compensation that comes from the work itself.

I felt that I had been totally saturated with the dilemmas of an emissary and advocate. My decision not to go on with diplomacy was firm. Although I had only served one period in two diplomatic posts, I knew that I was past all possibility of starting a new mission somewhere else. In the future, such expeditions as I would make in the outside world would be from a home base to which, after spasms of external activity, I would gratefully return.

On May 22, 1959, Suzy, Eli, Gila and I, with sixteen hundred other passengers, sailed from New York on S.S. *United States* for Southampton. We had planned a short vacation in London and Switzerland before arriving in Israel. In London I performed my first duty as president of the Weizmann Institute by addressing a large dinner in the Dorchester Hotel. Suzy and I then proceeded to Crans-sur-Sierre for a brief stay in the mountains, with sporadic golf between intense rain showers. I was undergoing what many politicians call "withdrawal symptoms." After nearly a dozen years of constant responsibility, with confidential papers flowing in and out of my desk in an atmosphere of urgency, I suddenly found myself in a kind of vacuum. Nothing flowed to or from me.

After ten days of repose, the sense of being outside the official communication system became frustrating. I do not think that there was any element of hurt prestige. The injury was rather in the intellectual domain. The muscles of my mind had been trained over long years to expand and contract with practiced speed in face of problems that could assault me at any hour. I now learned with humility that my previous worlds continued to revolve without me, for better or for worse, but in any case with inexorable continuity. There is a curious sense of hurt that goes along with the relief. Some of my worst golf shots at Crans-sur-Sierre came at moments when my mind was wandering back to Washington and the United Nations. My sense of being in a vacuum was enhanced by the knowledge that no successor had been appointed to either post.

I was confident of the stewardship of Yaacov Herzog in Washington and Mordecai Kidron in New York. Herzog's life is a unique drama in the story of our foreign service. The son of the Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Isaac Halevi Herzog, Yaacov was brought up in scholarly and pious seclusion, close to his father's spiritual world while creating a special mental universe of his own. His mercurial mind transferred itself fitfully from learning to politics. He was an original figure, orthodox without being sanctimonious, intellectually ambitious yet curiously reluctant to assume a central responsibility. He always worked in the shelter of someone else, first Ben Gurion, then Golda Meir, and later Eshkol and Golda again. He served us all with precision and a somewhat courtly deference out of tune with Israeli habit. When he came to me in Washington I had the sense of promoting his emancipation from a parental custody that must have been restrictive as well as warm. He brought to diplomacy a long sense of history as well as a subtle imagination. He had no time or thought for anything that did not bear directly on the interests of the Jewish people.

Everything about him was abrupt; his style and manner of speech and even his physical habits. He would come and speak to me at length and in detail and then, before I had time to look up, he would have risen from his chair and rushed out of the room. There was a constant hurry about him, as though he knew that some destiny was treading on his heels. In sad fact, he was in fragile health and was to die before the age of fifty. I had the superstition that his habit of departing without small talk after each conversation expressed a premonition that his time was circumscribed, that none of it should be wasted and that whatever could not be done today had no sure chance of being accomplished tomorrow. When he died in the prime of his life, I thought of Milton: "For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime, young Lycidas and hath not left his peer."

At Crans-sur-Sierre, telegrams were reaching me from our party headquarters, urging me to expedite my return to join an election campaign which might be started earlier than expected. Our last day in Europe was spent in search of the best available meal in a Zurich restaurant, and on July 2, we landed at Lod Airport in Tel Aviv, no longer as an ambassador and his wife on leave, but as private citizens returning home.

To my surprise, the airport lounge was filled not only with Weizmann Institute dignitaries, led by Meyer Weisgal, but by a whole panoply of Labor Party leaders, including Zalman Shazar, Beba Idelson, Mordecai Namir, Shraga Netzer and many others of the party faithful. There was evidently some scare about the possibility of a Herut victory. Although Dayan and Peres, like myself, had been harnessed to Mapai's electoral campaign, they were giving the party some trouble as well as much reinforcement. Dayan had made abrasive references to the "fifth floor of the Histadrut," where the Secretary-General dwelled. He had also said that if he could not join the Cabinet, nothing would interest him less than sitting around in the Knesset, where members have nothing to do but "drink tea in the cafeteria."

The old guard in the party was resentful of Ben Gurion's attempt to introduce new blood. But the Hebrew press was writing appreciatively of my mission, pointing out that I had been correct in my stable view of American-Israeli relations. The catastrophe that had been predicted for Israel under the Eisenhower regime had come to nothing. Israel was enjoying the fruits of the Sinai Campaign and was under no pressure on boundaries, refugees or Jerusalem. We had become the subject of sympathetic emotion on the part of Secretary Dulles, who had died while I was crossing the Atlantic. There was even a glimmer of rationality in the American attitude to the arms problem. A few items of U.S. equipment were being supplied, and an initially favorable response had been given by Secretary Herter to Israel's application for ground-to-air missiles. The fact that we had now gone through two Administrations, those of Truman and Eisenhower, with the basic elements of the American-Israeli partnership unimpaired, seemed to be of great importance. It proved that there were durable elements in the relationship that were not dependent on Truman's favorable attitude or on the special place that the American Jews occupied in the Democratic Party.

On July 5 I delivered my inaugural address on assuming the presidency of the Weizmann Institute. I dealt not only with the role of the Weizmann Institute and of Israeli science in the construction of a new community but also with a specific project that I had revolved for several weeks in New York before my departure: my intention to convene an international conference the following year, bringing some of the world's leading scientists together with leaders of government from developing states in Africa, Asia and Latin America. I felt that the two dominant movements in twentieth-century life were the movement of national liberation and the movement of scientific progress. One of them had changed the political map; the other had transformed every prospect of human welfare or disaster. These two movements, however, were living in separation from each other. Science was having little effect on the economic, social and cultural levels of the new states, while the leaders of emerging countries had little consciousness of what science and technology could do to accelerate their development and save them the long periods of transition that the industrialized states had been forced to undergo. I felt that if I could bring the leaders of these two movements together in creative encounter, and in some mutuality of human concern, I might help create a new dimension in international relations of which Israel and the Weizmann Institute would be both the arena and the beneficiary. I had discussed this in New York with Meyer Weisgal and the dynamic adviser to the Institute, Lily Shultz, who had prepared a memorandum on how the proposed conference could be organized and composed. I had now developed this theme into a broader conceptual argument and sought to relate it to one of the problems of Israel's foreign relations, namely the need to consolidate our position among developing nations.

The Weizmann Institute is the culmination of Israel's quest for quality. Science is one of the few domains in which our small, poor country can transcend its material limitations and stand on a level of equality with the advanced nations of the world. The existence of a family of research workers probing the mysteries of nature gives Israeli society a quality quite different from what it would have possessed without such an asset. I hoped that the atmosphere of rationality, balance and universal solidarity which distinguished the scientific community would diffuse its influence over other sectors of Israeli life. As I walked through the grounds, sensing the orange blossom still in the air and contemplating the rich landscape climbing from the green valley toward the pale Judean hills, I was often tempted to devote myself exclusively to the guardianship of Weizmann's legacy. And yet, I was pulled by the urgent compulsions of Israel's need into the pursuit of a political vocation. With a full decade of service in the United States and the United Nations behind me, I was still only in my early forties. I felt that my energies were too restless to be satisfied with the limited concerns of a university president fighting for his budget and entertaining his faculty and graduates. I decided, therefore, to remain faithful to the understanding that I had reached with Weisgal in New York. The executive tasks would continue to fall upon him, while I would give the Institute such service and reinforcement as my name and energies could offer.

Not that it was easy to abandon the tranquillities of the campus for the din and turmoil of the electoral battlefield. Something of my relief on returning to Israel was expressed by Suzy in a letter to my mother:

> *At last we are in our own country and our own home. The house is beautiful beyond all expectations. Especially both the children love their charming and comfortable rooms. I can hardly wait to hear their voices and see them in the delightful garden and all the little neighbors waiting for them. We are happy and excited. It all seems so logical. We had a terrific welcome at the airport with speeches and cameras and flowers. The Institute and Meyer [Weisgal] have put themselves out most warmly and generously. I feel that for the first time we can live like a family and it moves me very deeply.*

Many visitors came to the Weizmann Institute, some seeking an outlet for their generosity, others arriving from distant countries, especially from Africa and Asia, where it had been commonly believed that the scientific revolution was the inheritance of rich countries in the North and West alone. A small nation with a scientific research system was—and remains—a rarity. I was available for consultation, entertainment and the persuasion of the Jewish visitors to channel their support of Israel through the reinforcement of its scientific tradition. It was in those days that a visitor from New York, Siegfried Ullman, called on me by chance at home and began a connection with Rehovot that led to the establishment of its Institute of Life Sciences. The preparation for the first Rehovot conference went on under my active guidance and supervision. But many hours during the summer and early autumn were spent in the domestic political arena.

The political outlook seemed bright. At my inauguration ceremony on July 5, Ben Gurion had surprised the two thousand participants by calling me "the most distinguished emissary of the Jewish people in our generation." A few days later, at a party rally at the Habima Theatre, he referred to me as "the greatest spokesman for our nation's cause since Weizmann." Nobody could say this was not a generous eulogy, but the "Ben Gurionologists" knew what to look for beneath the latent surface of the words. They told me darkly that it was not all that simple. According to them, I was being put in a special place in Ben Gurion's consciousness. The notions of "emissary" and "spokesman" did not belong to the language of leadership. Ben Gurion was hinting that it was for him and others to make the policy, and for me to be its advocate. There was also a diminution of Weizmann's image in the idea that he had merely been the "spokesman" rather than a leader and decision maker. Ben Gurion was tenacious in the stereotypes of thought that he fixed in his own mind. He was also less afraid of constant repetition than any human being could be. When the election campaign was successfully over, he sent me a portrait of himself with a dedication: "To Abba Eban, *spokesman* of the Jewish people." I had now begun to regret the emphasis that the public placed on my forensic experience. I even wished that I had not called my book *The Voice of Israel,* as though I were eternally destined to articulate policies made by others.

After crowding my institute duties into the first two days of the week, I would go out of the main gate of Yad Weizmann with a sharp sense of transition. It was like moving to a foreign land. The hard world began with the noisy main street of Rehovot and its strident chaos of trucks, bicycles, buses and the odd donkey cart urged on its way by a patient, bearded, sad-eyed Jew in a cloth cap who seemed to represent the special tone of Israeli rural life. A few minutes later I would be in Tel Aviv, where I would plunge into the struggle of Mapai for a renewal of its mandate.

My transition from diplomacy to party politics raised eyebrows among friends and adversaries alike. It took some time before they could tear themselves away from the metaphors of incongruity. The tension was real, and an American writer has described it well:

> *One of Eban's great problems was that he was entering a struggle for political power with the ruling clique of Mapai composed largely of men who were not distinguished by either intellectual prowess or academic distinction. Many were actually anti-intellectual. In the early days they had dug ditches, worked in the vineyards and wine cellars, ploughed the earth, spread manure,*

> *drained swamps, pioneered. Later they had helped establish Kibbutzim and Moshavim. They had formed a closely-knit group, almost all from Central or Eastern Europe. They were rough-hewn, blunt-speaking, short of formality, suspicious of rhetoric, given more to emotionalism than intellectuality and defiant of propriety and conventionality, especially in matters of dress and social niceties. . . . Eban, the scholar, who retained his high position by force of intellect, seemed strangely out of place amongst them. All these Party stalwarts acknowledged his great contribution to Israel, respected his talents, recognised his vote-getting potentiality and gave him provisional approval. Yet, at the same time, he did not fit their pattern and they made no secret of their feeling that "he is not really one of us."*

"Provisional approval" was perhaps all that I needed. It was certainly as much as I was going to get. The party veterans were not particularly pleased about myself and Dayan occupying the twelfth and thirteenth places on the party list, with the clear implication of instant ministerial rank ahead. Some of the political figures, organized in what was called the Gush, probably felt that both of us were newcomers to politics and should have been required to "take our place in the line." But the Israeli electors came en masse to hear and see the new candidates, not the veterans. I drew a crowd of twelve thousand one day in Tel Aviv, ten thousand in Ramat Gan, fifteen thousand in a stadium in Haifa, seven thousand in Bat Yam, fifteen thousand in Rehovot, five thousand in Bnei Brak. In the squalid but vibrant Tel Aviv quarter of Hatikvah, I spoke from a balcony in Hebrew and Arabic to twelve thousand. I looked down on the mass of swarthy faces, and throwing away my learned speech about electoral reforms, I talked to them more from the heart. I found a special access to Sephardic Jews. It may have had something to do with their respect for words, their dedication to form and their courtly response to the big world in which I had served them abroad.

The fact that I was having some success now began to be reflected in opposition and criticism. Little of this caused me any sharp hurt. The Herut press argued hopefully that what I was saying was beyond the grasp of my listeners. This, however, appeared to be more of an insult to my listeners than to me, and many of them responded in kind. In general, while much is talked about "the average man," I have never met anybody in Israel who agrees to accept that phrase as a definition of himself.

Whether my audiences agreed with me or not, they followed me with much curiosity. The press was respectably fair, although one enterprising journalist, who should have known better, did try to create a sensation by photographing my somewhat modest home in Rehovot with a trick lens so as to make it appear like the gigantic central palace in the Versailles complex. The implication was that a feudal lord like Eban should be suspiciously received in the Hatikvah Quarter.

By the time it had all ended, I had spoken to a quarter of a million people in a country of less than three million. Apart from Ben Gurion and Begin, I seemed to have drawn the largest crowds of any candidate of any party. It was an encouraging encounter. I felt that most of our citizens were looking for an idealistic backdrop to their material concerns.

When the votes were counted on a stifling, hot day in early November, our party had received the greatest vote in its history. Ben Gurion and his mixed team of veterans and newcomers were in possession of the field.

I was sworn in as a member of the Knesset on November 30, 1959. Two weeks later Ben Gurion made the formal announcement of his Cabinet. He himself would continue as Defense Minister, and Golda Meir as Foreign Minister. Dayan would be Minister of Agriculture; Peres, Deputy Defense Minister; and I would be Minister without Portfolio.

In several conversations Ben Gurion had given me the impression that my roving commission in the Cabinet would take me into the area of international affairs. He had spoken of the British precedent, under which there were Cabinet ministers without portfolio dealing with some sectors of foreign affairs under the general authority of the Foreign Minister. The expanding range of Israel's international interests made all this theoretically tenable. It took no account, however, of temperamental realities. Mrs. Meir told me frankly that while I was competent to be a Foreign Minister one day, I had qualities beyond those that were feasible for a mere deputy. The best thing, therefore, would be for me to wait my turn, and in the meantime, to deal with "other matters." This was fair enough, but when I asked Ben Gurion what the "other matters" were, he was engagingly vague. The truth is that behind his somewhat childlike innocence, there was a very pragmatic cunning. He knew that Mapai had used me as it had used Dayan and Peres in the electoral struggle. This did not, however, mean that we were to be rewarded too fulsomely once the wedding was over. He had created an illusion—that more than one minister could work on foreign affairs in Israel—and had not seriously explored whether this was true or not. He was not prepared to push his commitment very far. He wanted to live in some kind of peace with his contemporaries, not only with his juniors.

The first result for me was frustration. The Cabinet post was nebulous and empty. In the Israeli system, a minister without portfolio means exactly what it says—it is a function without duties. I had little to do except pursue my plan for the international conference under the auspices of the Weizmann Institute and to take part in the many ministerial committees which transacted the more concrete parts of the Cabinet's work. Although the Cabinet meetings and ministerial consultations were interesting, I felt myself to be a spectator of the national drama. I contributed my advice, but had no part in the execution.

The fact remained that within a year I had gone from my embassy to Cabinet status, and foreign opinion was more impressed with the rank than conscious of its emptiness. Thus, the mayor of New York, Robert Wagner, wrote: "New York is proud of you. Do not forget that you are only one of the six men ever to have been awarded the freedom of the city." In a letter to a friend Suzy wrote: "We are marking time as gracefully as we can and waiting for his time and his proper place. So far, the appearance of things is excellent, but the substance is lacking. It lacks completeness, sweep, authority and, above all, a chance to do a creative job for the country and its people."

One day in early May 1960, the Cabinet asked me to represent it at the celebration in Buenos Aires of the 150th year of Argentinean independence. My delegation was to include Brigadier Meir Zorea of the Northern Command and three civilian officials. We would fly in an El Al Britannia on flight #601, leaving Lod Airport on May 18. This was the first and only El Al flight scheduled for Argentina, where we had not yet secured regular landing rights. Twenty-four hours after its arrival at the Buenos Aires airport, the plane took off again at midnight on Friday, May 20, with Adolf Eichmann aboard. He had been forcibly, but gently, spirited onto the plane in drugged condition in an El Al uniform, and the Argentinean authorities knew nothing of it. Eichmann was the Nazi officer in charge of the extermination of Jews in Europe. His capture by Israeli intelligence agents was a brilliant enterprise.

During the hot summer of 1960, I threw myself into the organization of the Rehovot Conference. It was a splendid success. The participants came from forty nations. They included the President of the Congo Republic, the Prime Minister of Nepal, Vice-Presidents, finance ministers, ministers of commerce, housing and labor, bank presidents, ministers of education and heads of atomic centers; the director-general of the World Health Organization; Paul Hoffmann, managing director of the UN Special Fund; and a brilliant corps of scientists headed by the great nuclear physicist Sir John Cockroft; his fellow Nobel laureate, Professor Patrick Blackett; Alvin Weinberg, director of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory; Jerrold Zacharias of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Arthur Lewis, the principal of University College in Jamaica; and the director-general of Euratom. Apart from the visit of Prime Minister U Nu of Burma in 1954, no head of state or head of government had ever visited Israel before. Now there were some thirty ministerial guests helping to take Israel out of diplomatic isolation. In my opening address I described the speed with which African and Asian countries had broken out of tutelage to liberation:

> *If institutional freedom could itself guarantee peace and welfare we should now be celebrating mankind's golden age. But, alas, the flags are not enough. In the awakening continents freedom has not been attended by a parallel liberation of peoples from their social and economic ills. Behind the new emblems of institutional freedom millions continue to languish in squalor, exploitation and disease. Men awaken to learn that they may be free in every constitutional sense and yet lose the essence of their freedom in the throes of famine and want.*

I called on the scientists to give a greater proportion of their care and compassion to the problems of the developing countries, and I advised the leaders of new nations to establish an indigenous scientific tradition in their countries as an instrument of intellectual freedom and expanding welfare.

The Israeli public reacted with pride to the convergence of so many eminent visitors. After the first awkward silences were broken, the scientists and statesmen of new countries found a common language born of their human solidarity. I pointed out that "the business of science is the investigation of nature, but science has a human origin and a human destination."

In her recently published memoirs, Golda Meir has paid tribute to the first Rehovot Conference as something of a breakthrough in Israel's international relations. One of the most sensitive participants was the head of Victoria College in Sierra Leone, Dr. Solomon Caulker. He rose with tears in his eyes to say, "I came in darkness, but I leave in light." A few hours later on his way back home, his plane crashed at Dakar, leaving the only sad repercussion of the conference.

In personal terms, the conference was significant for me. While most of my political and diplomatic experience had been in the West, I had now established links with leading statesmen in dozens of developing Third World countries, especially in Africa. I had also achieved another result. There is always the danger of claustrophobia in Israel's intellectual climate: the peril of intense preoccupation with our own affairs; the assumption that others owe attention to our problems while we have no particular obligations toward theirs. I felt during that glittering week that I may have helped focus Israel's interest on something less provincial than her own concerns. We were able to make a contribution beyond our own immediate necessities to the exploration of one of the world's most tragic and fateful predicaments.

A few weeks before the conference opened, Ben Gurion had appointed me Minister of Education and Culture in place of Zalman Aranne, who had resigned in protest against a lack of support of his position on teachers' strikes. Ben Gurion had toyed with the idea of appointing Yigael Yadin; and a few days before the decision on the Education Ministry was made, Teddy Kollek, his director-general, asked me innocently if I would like to take the vacant portfolio of Minister of Posts. I replied with some heat. It was quite clear that an attempt was being made to cut my international stature down to size, and to make me somewhat ridiculous. Education and Culture was quite another matter. After Defense, it was the most far-flung of all the Israeli ministries. It had more importance than corresponding ministries in most countries. The Israeli school network is highly centralized, certainly no less so than the Napoleonic system under which a Minister of Education in Paris could tell you from his files exactly what subjects were being taught at any given hour in any of the thousands of schools throughout the Republic. In Israel the Ministry had total control of the elementary-school system, and was beginning to participate more actively in the secondary-school system, which, however, was then somewhat slender in its development. Higher education then consisted entirely of the three veteran institutions: the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Haifa Technion and the Weizmann Institute of Science. But it was clear that there would be a chance for expansion, and Tel Aviv and Bar Ilan universities were waiting at the gate.